



# SOMALIA

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# Chapter 1 | Geography



Panoramic view from over the Indian Ocean of the southern Somali port city of Kismayo  
Flickr / AMISOM Public Information

## Introduction

Somalia is located in east Africa, just north of the equator in the region called the Horn of Africa. With the Indian Ocean marking its eastern border and the Gulf of Aden marking its northern border, Somalia has the longest coastline of any African country (3,025 km or 1,880 mi). Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya lie along Somalia's western border, from north to the south.<sup>1</sup>

Somalia's land area is slightly smaller than Texas, covering 627,000 sq km (242,000 sq mi). The mountainous region in the north turns into semiarid plains interrupted by deep valleys and plateaus, where higher elevations provide relief from the equatorial heat. The Jubba and Shabelle rivers run through the southern part of Somalia and support the country's main agricultural area. The capital Mogadishu is located along the Indian Ocean, north of the equator.<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- 2 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., "Geography," in *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/33.htm>
- 3 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia>
- 4 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

Somalia's maritime claims extend 200 nautical miles into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The western border with Ethiopia extends 1,600 km (994 mi), but because of a territorial dispute over the Ogaden highlands, part of the eastern border between the two countries is shown on some maps as provisional or an administrative line.<sup>5</sup>

Somaliland, a region in northern Somalia sandwiched between the Gulf of Aden in the north and Ethiopia to the south, declared independence in 1991.<sup>6</sup> Puntland, which lies east of Somaliland in the northeast, became an autonomous region in August 1998, with the city of Garowe as its capital.<sup>7,8</sup>

## Topographical Divisions

### *Guban*

The semiarid coastal plain called the Guban (scrubland) runs parallel to the Gulf of Aden in the north for about 240 km (149 mi), between the port cities of Zeila (also known as Saylac) in the west and Berbera in the east.<sup>9</sup> The northwestern part of the Guban consists of barren lava fields that originate in Djibouti and end in a series of hills that merge into a plain. The plain narrows as it extends eastward, but widens again near Berbera.<sup>10</sup> The Guban is 56 km (35 mi) wide in the west near Zeila and only 6 km (4 mi) wide in the east. This lowland area is hot, humid, and arid.<sup>11</sup> When rain falls, scrub vegetation grows quickly, providing food for livestock.<sup>12</sup>

### *Karkeer Mountains*

The Karkeer Range covers the northern part of Somalia, beginning in Ethiopia and running through the tip of the Horn of Africa. The mountains rise sharply from sea level to 1,800 m (5,905 ft) in the west and up to 2,100 m (6,890 ft) in the east. The highest point of the Karkeer Mountains is Shimber Berris, which reaches 2,407 m (7,896 ft), near the town of Erigavo in the north-central area. The area has a more hospitable climate than most other regions in Somalia, with temperatures that drop below freezing in December.<sup>13</sup>

The Al Madow Mountains—sometimes called Galgala Hills or the Golis Mountains—are part of the Karkeer Range. These mountains run more than 200 km (125 mi) parallel to the Gulf of Aden. The steep northern slopes receive considerable precipitation and are covered by thick vegetation. A single road that connects the city of Boosaaso, a primary seaport on the northern coast, to the regional capital of Garowe marks the eastern boundary of the mountainous region.<sup>14</sup>

5 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia," in *The World Factbook*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

6 BBC News, "Somaliland Profile," 14 December 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115069>

7 BBC News, "Puntland Profile," 11 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14114727>

8 Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Puntland's problems: It's not just al-Shabab that threatens Somalia's stability," Brookings Institution, 19 June 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/06/19/puntlands-problems/>

9 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Guban," 20 July 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guban>

10 Global Security, "Somalia Country Study," n.d., [https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call\\_02-8\\_ch4.htm](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call_02-8_ch4.htm)

11 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Guban," 20 July 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guban>

12 United Nations Environment Programme, "The State of the Environment in Somalia: A Desk Study," December 2005, 8–10, [http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb\\_somalia.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb_somalia.pdf)

13 Said S. Samatar, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Climate," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/34.htm>

14 Stratfor, "Al Shabaab's Hideout in Northern Somalia," 28 February 2013, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/al-shabaabs-hideout-northern-somalia>

## Ogo Plateau

Southward, the mountains flatten to form the Ogo Plateau, an area of shallow valleys and dry riverbeds that are an extension of the Ogaden highlands of Ethiopia. To the east, this vast plateau is interrupted by the Nugaal Valley and the Mudug Plain. Without perennial rivers, the area's watersheds are dry for much of the year. To the west, the Ogo Plateau descends into the Haud area. The Haud provides grazing grounds for livestock during the rainy seasons. Permanent wells make farming possible. Natural depressions in the region become lakes and ponds during the rains.<sup>15, 16</sup>

## Southern Somali Plateau and Coastal Plain

The basins of Somalia's two constantly flowing rivers, the Shabelle and the Jubba, are south of the Mudug Plain. The area surrounding these rivers is the most fertile in the country. The Somali Plateau descends into a coastal plain along the Indian Ocean and is on average 180 m (590 ft) above sea level.<sup>17</sup> The coastal plain, where the nation's capital is located, is the largest geographic region in Somalia. Beaches can be short and steep, with unstable sand dunes. Short grasses prevail in the northern part of the plain; typical savannah vegetation predominates in the south.<sup>18</sup>

## Climate

Somalia is located in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone, where the northeast and southeast trade winds meet as they move north and south across the equator twice a year. These winds are responsible for the four wet and dry seasons in the tropics.<sup>19, 20</sup>

In Somalia, the year is divided into four seasons: two dry seasons and two wet seasons. Gu, the main rainy season, occurs from April to June, followed by xagaa, a dry season lasting from June to September. Deyr, the second rainy season, lasts from October to December and is followed by the main dry season, known as jilaal. The tangambili (periods of changing winds) are hot and humid in the coastal areas, but dry inland.<sup>21</sup> The year 2018 saw dry conditions combined with warmer than normal temperatures, especially in the northern and central regions.<sup>22</sup>

Tropical cyclones form in the Gulf of Aden and occasionally make landfall in the northern regions. Although not very common, cyclones are more frequent in the rainy seasons, bringing torrential rains and intense winds to the region. In 2018, hundreds of farms were destroyed, and 50 people died when tropical cyclone Sagar slammed into Somaliland.<sup>23, 24</sup>

15 Said S. Samatar, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Terrain, Vegetation, and Drainage," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sotoc.html>

16 United Nations Environment Programme, "The State of the Environment in Somalia: A Desk Study," December 2005, 8–10, [http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb\\_somalia.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb_somalia.pdf)

17 Said S. Samatar, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Terrain, Vegetation, and Drainage," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/35.htm>

18 Global Security, "Somalia Country Study," n.d., [https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call\\_02-8\\_ch4.htm](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call_02-8_ch4.htm)

19 National Weather Service, "Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone," n.d., <https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/itcz>

20 Rita Kennedy, "The Climate in Somalia," *USA Today*, 21 March 2018, <https://traveltips.usatoday.com/climate-somalia-104292.html>

21 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia–Climate," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Land#ref37716>

22 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Somalia: Climate Update—January 2019 Monthly Rainfall and Vegetation Cover," Relief Web, 25 February 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-climate-update-january-2019-monthly-rainfall-and-vegetation-cover-issued>

23 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

24 Abdiqani Hassan, "Storm in Somaliland Kills Dozens, Wipes Out Farms, Livestock," Reuters, 23 May 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-cyclone/storm-in-somaliland-kills-dozens-wipes-out-farms-livestock-idUSKCN1IO1BJ>



On the northern coast, the sun shines all year round, and the desert climate is characterized by hot and muggy winters and very hot summers with temperatures reaching 45°C (113°F). The humidity ranges from 40% in the afternoon to 85% at night. The wind from the desert raises dust clouds. Rains are rare and sporadic, with an average rainfall of 5 cm (2 in).<sup>25</sup>

In the mountainous areas, the climate is milder because of the altitude. Winter months can bring below-freezing temperatures to the highlands. The mountainous region of the northwest is one of the rainiest areas in the country, receiving about 50 cm (16 in) of rain annually.<sup>26</sup>

On the east coast, the northern part is a little hotter than the southern part. The hottest month is usually April in the south and May in the north. In the summer, the temperature on the coast decreases because of offshore currents. The relative humidity is about 70% during the year. In the capital, Mogadishu, temperatures are high and stable throughout the year, with sea breezes helping to temper the heat.<sup>27</sup>

In the southwestern inland areas, the winter is scorching hot. The maximum temperature is around 37°C (99°F) in January and 39°C (102°F) in March; in the summer, the temperature drops to 33°C (91°F). Rainfall ranges from 35 to 50 cm (14 to 20 in), making the region suitable for agriculture.<sup>28, 29</sup> The areas with most rainfall lie in the middle Shabelle, which receives around 75 cm (30 in) per year.<sup>30</sup>

The dry interior receives 15 cm (6 in) of rain. Because of scarce rainfall in some parts of the country, droughts occur every 3 to 4 years, with severe droughts every 9 years.<sup>31</sup> In 2019, Somalia faced one of the worst droughts in more than three decades.<sup>32</sup>

## Major Rivers

Somalia's two permanent rivers, the Jubba and the Shabelle, originate in Ethiopia and flow through the southwest of the country into the Indian Ocean. The fertile areas formed by these river basins are the center of Somalia's agricultural production.<sup>33, 34</sup>

The Shabelle is Somalia's longest river, flowing across 1,820 km (1,130 mi). The river rises in Ethiopia's eastern highlands and flows south toward the Indian Ocean. When it reaches Mogadishu, it flows parallel to the coast and becomes a swamp about 85 km (53 mi) downstream that dissipates into the sands near the Jubba River. During heavy rainy seasons, the Shabelle may connect with the Jubba.<sup>35, 36</sup>

25 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

26 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

27 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

28 Said S. Samatar, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Climate," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992, <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/34.htm>)

29 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

30 Rita Kennedy, "The Climate in Somalia," *USA Today*, 21 March 2018, <https://traveltips.usatoday.com/climate-somalia-104292.html>

31 Climate to Travel, "Climate–Somalia," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/somalia>

32 Rebecca Ratcliffe, "Two Million People at Risk of Starvation as Drought Returns to Somalia," *Guardian*, 6 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jun/06/two-million-people-at-risk-of-starvation-as-drought-returns-to-somalia>

33 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., "Geography: Terrain, Vegetation, and Drainage," in *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992, <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/35.htm>)

34 Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "The Jubba and Shabelle Rivers and Their Importance to Somalia," Relief Web, 3 June 2016, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/juba-and-shabelle-rivers-and-their-importance-somalia>

35 World Atlas, "Major Rivers of Somalia," n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/major-rivers-of-somalia.html>

36 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Shebeli River," 28 December 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Shebeli-River>

The Jubba River also originates in the highlands of Ethiopia and flows for 1,808 km (1,123 mi), with 1,004 km (624 mi) in Somalia. The river enters Somalia near the town of Doolow and flows south to Kismaayo, where it empties into the Indian Ocean. The Jubba sustains rich wildlife that includes cheetahs, lions, leopards, hyenas, buffalos, hippopotamus, crocodiles, oryx, gazelles, ostriches, jackals, and wild donkeys.<sup>37, 38, 39</sup>

## Major Cities

Population counting in Somalia is complicated because of the movement of nomads and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Between late 2013 and early 2014, the Somali authorities conducted the first comprehensive population survey since the census of 1975, with the help of the UN Population Fund. Based on the data collected in the survey, the total population was estimated at 12,316,895 Somalis. Over 2 million Somalis live in rural areas (23%), and over 5 million live in urban areas (42%). A little over 26% of the population is defined as nomadic rather than rural, and 1.1 million Somalis or 9% of the population are IDPs. The total population in each city was not calculated; therefore, numbers are estimated and based on various sources. Urban areas include administrative districts and regional headquarters, regardless of the availability of basic common amenities associated with urban areas in other countries.<sup>40</sup>

City	Population <sup>41, 42</sup>
Mogadishu Banadir region	1,280,000
Hargeysa (Somaliland) Woqooyi Galbeed region	802,740
Berbera (Somaliland) Woqooyi Galbeed region	240,000
Kismaayo Lower Juba region	230,000
Merca (Marka) Lower Shabelle region	215,000

### Mogadishu (Muqdisho)

Mogadishu is Somalia’s capital and largest city and is home to a major deep-water port. Located just north of the equator on the Indian Ocean, the city was one of the earliest Arab settlements on the African East Coast, dating back to the 10th century. Mogadishu came under the control of the sultan of Zanzibar in 1871 and later became

37 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Jubba River,” 12 March 2012, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jubba-River>  
 38 Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, “The Juba and Shabelle rivers and their importance to Somalia,” Relief Web, 3 June 2016, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/juba-and-shabelle-rivers-and-their-importance-somalia>  
 39 Alluring World, “Jubba River,” n.d., <http://www.alluringworld.com/jubba-river/>  
 40 United National Population Fund and the Federal Republic of Somalia, “Population Estimation Survey 2014,” October 2014, <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>  
 41 United National Population Fund and the Federal Republic of Somalia, “Population Estimation Survey 2014,” October 2014, <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>  
 42 Mongabay, “The Biggest Cities in Somalia,” n.d., <https://population.mongabay.com/population/somalia>

the capital of Italian Somaliland in the 1930s. In 1960, when Italian Somaliland united with British Somaliland, Mogadishu became the capital of the Republic of Somalia.<sup>43, 44</sup>

Thirty years of civil war devastated the city. In August 2011, al-Shabaab militants were forced out of the capital. Parts of the city that had been reduced to refugee camps and war-scarred buildings have since been rebuilt and developed. In the last few years, life has returned to near normal in the fast-growing city, which now offers investment opportunities to Somalis returning from exile, as well as street side cafes, shops and restaurants, playgrounds, beaches, hospitals, and hotels. Aden Adde International Airport was inaugurated in 2015.<sup>45</sup>

Occasionally, the city is targeted by al-Shabaab militants. In March 2019, militants stormed an area lined with hotels, shops, and restaurants and killed 20 people during a day-long siege. In May of the same year, a suicide bomber drove a vehicle filled with explosives into a public building during food distribution for Ramadan.<sup>46, 47</sup>

## Hargeysa

Hargeysa is located in the northern Somali Horn of Africa. During the civil war in 1988, the city was completely destroyed, and most of the population fled. It has since been rebuilt, and in 1991, became the de facto capital of the self-proclaimed—yet internationally unrecognized—Republic of Somaliland.<sup>48, 49</sup>

The city lies 1,334 m (4,377 ft) above sea level in the Ogo Highlands, in the northwest interior. The city's climate is mild, and the surrounding area is the only region in Somalia that supports farming, other than the Jubba and Shabelle river valleys. The city is a center for livestock trade and has an open air livestock market.<sup>50, 51</sup>

Today, the city has an international airport, a university, and a vibrant cultural scene. The annual international book fair attracts large crowds, owing to the stable political environment in Somaliland. Foreigners who visit the relatively safe city can enjoy sitting in cafes and restaurants that line the more affluent areas. However, poverty is rampant, with unemployment reaching 75% and their strict adherence to Islamic customs prohibits the consumption of alcohol. The city's population fluctuates seasonally with nomadic herders.<sup>52, 53</sup> About 45,000 people displaced by famine and drought live in settlements in and around Hargeysa.<sup>54</sup>

43 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Mogadishu," 4 March 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mogadishu>

44 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Italian Somaliland," 23 July 2010, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Italian-Somaliland>

45 Africa Renewal, "From Strife to Revival, Mogadishu Holds Hopes and Dreams," United Nations, April 2016, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2016/strife-revival-mogadishu-holds-hopes-and-dreams>

46 BBC News, "Somali Forces End Day-Long Mogadishu Siege," 1 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47412700>

47 Harun Maruf, "4 Killed in Mogadishu District HQ Blast," VOA, 14 May 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/4-killed-mogadishu-district-hq-blast>

48 Amy McKenna, "Hargeysa," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 23 October 2006, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hargeysa>

49 Eric Hooglund, "Chapter 4: Government and Politics," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992).

50 Amy McKenna, "Hargeysa," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 23 October 2006, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hargeysa>

51 Eric Hooglund, "Chapter 4: Government and Politics," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992).

52 James Jeffrey, "Hargeisa: Inside Somaliland's Would-Be Capital City," CNN, 20 July 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/hargeisa-somaliland-somalia-africa/index.html>

53 Michael Walls, "Statebuilding in the Somali Horn: Compromise, Competition and Representation," Africa Research Institute, 4 December 2014, <https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/statebuilding-somali-horn/>

54 OCHA, "Somalia: Better Days Ahead for the Homeless of Hargeysa," 27 January 2014, <https://www.unocha.org/story/somalia-better-days-ahead-homeless-hargeysa>

## Berbera

Situated on the Gulf of Aden in the northwest, the city of Berbera has been a Muslim settlement since medieval times. It was claimed by the Portuguese in the 16th century, and then later by the Ottoman Turks and the Egyptians. The British arrived in 1884 and made the city the capital of British Somaliland until 1941. Today, much of its infrastructure and architecture are falling into disrepair.<sup>55, 56, 57</sup>

Berbera serves as Somaliland's primary port city. In 2018, Somaliland signed a multi-million dollar contract with the port operator DP World to expand the port, modernize the facilities, and create an economic free zone in the area. The project is expected to turn the city into an important regional economic hub and attract new businesses and employment opportunities.<sup>58, 59</sup>

Its population varies seasonally, increasing when herders bring cattle to market and decreasing when hot weather in July through September sends people to the Ogo Highlands.<sup>60</sup> Until 2019, only one poorly maintained paved road ran from Berbera through Hargeysa and onward to the Ethiopian border, but in early 2019, construction began on a new multilane road along this route, with funding from the United Arab Emirates. The project is expected to be completed in 2022 and increase trade with Ethiopia by 30%.<sup>61</sup>

## Kismaayo

Kismaayo (also spelled Chisimayu) is a port city and the regional capital of the Lower Juba region and the state of Jubaland. The city lies on the coast of the Indian Ocean, near the mouth of the Jubba River, halfway between Mogadishu and the Kenyan Border. It is the commercial hub of Jubaland and southern Somalia.<sup>62, 63</sup>

The city started as a small fishing village. In the early 1870s, the town grew into a major center of livestock trade under the Sultan of Zanzibar. The British created Jubaland in 1896 as part of British East Africa and claimed the city of Kismaayo in 1887. In 1926, the British ceded it to the Italians, who incorporated it into Italian Somaliland.<sup>64, 65, 66</sup>

After independence in 1960, the port was upgraded, and a large meat processing plant was built, attracting many migrants to the city. During the civil war, various local militias fought for control of the area. In 2008, al-Shabaab and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took control of the city and set their strategic headquarters there. In 2012, the

55 Journey by Design, "Berbera," n.d., <https://journeysbydesign.com/destinations/somaliland/berbera>

56 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Berbera," 13 October 2011, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Berbera>

57 Lonely Planet, "Berbera," n.d., <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/somaliland-puntland-and-somalia/somaliland/berbera>

58 Odindo Ayieko, "Berbera Port Brewing Tension between Somaliland and Somalia," EABW Digital, 19 October 2018, <https://www.busiweek.com/berbera-port-brewing-tension-between-somaliland-and-somalia/>

59 Charlie Mitchell, "DP World Launches \$442m Port Expansion in Somaliland," N Business, 11 October 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/dp-world-launches-442m-port-expansion-in-somaliland-1.779605>

60 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Berbera," 13 October 2011, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Berbera>

61 Global Construction Review, "Berbera–Ethiopia Highway Set to Turn Somaliland into 'Major Regional Trading Hub,'" 1 March 2019, <http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/berberaethiopia-highway-set-turn-somaliland-major/>

62 UN Habitat, "Kismaayo Urban Profile," Working Paper and Spatial Analyses for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displacement Crises, United National Human Settlements Programme, November 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kismaayo%20City%20Profile.pdf>

63 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Kismaayo," 6 March 2008, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kismaayo>

64 Stratfor, "Somalia: Regional Rivalries and the Fight for Kismaayo," 28 June 2013, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/somalia-regional-rivalries-and-fight-kismaayo>

65 UN Habitat, "Kismaayo Urban Profile," Working Paper and Spatial Analyses for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displacement Crises, United National Human Settlements Programme, November 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kismaayo%20City%20Profile.pdf>

66 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Kismaayo," 6 March 2008, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kismaayo>

Somali National Army (SNA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) liberated the city.<sup>67</sup> In July 2019, al-Shabaab executed an attack on a hotel in the port area, killing 26 people. It was the worst attack on Kismaayo since al-Shabaab were driven out of the city in 2012.<sup>68</sup>

Kismaayo is the second largest metropolitan area in southern Somalia after Mogadishu, and one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Somalia. In the last five years, thousands of Somalis have been repatriated ther from Kenyan refugee camps. In addition, IDPs escaping drought conditions have also relocated to 100 sites in and around Kismaayo, making population figures from 2014 unreliable.<sup>69</sup>

## **Merca**

Merca (written as “Marka” in Somali) is a southern port city on the Indian Ocean about 73 km (45 mi) southwest of Mogadishu (the driving distance is 95 km or 59 mi). It is the capital of the Lower Shabelle region. The city has been an international trading port since the 10th century. Somalis began to settle the area in the 13th century. Because of offshore coral reefs, shipping is somewhat limited. Goods are transported between docked ships and the actual port by barges. The coral reefs also limit the expansion of the port.<sup>70</sup>

In 2012, AMISOM and the Somalia National Army drove out the occupying al-Shabaab, but in 2016, the group executed a series of successful attacks and retook temporary control of the city.<sup>71, 72</sup>

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- 67 UN Habitat, “Kismayo Urban Profile,” Working Paper and Spatial Analyses for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displacement Crises, United National Human Settlements Programme, November 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kismayo%20City%20Profile.pdf>
- 68 BBC News, “Kismayo Attack: At Least 26 Dead as Gunmen Storm Somali Hotel,” 14 July 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48969781>
- 69 UN Habitat, “Kismayo Urban Profile,” Working Paper and Spatial Analyses for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displacement Crises, United National Human Settlements Programme, November 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Kismayo%20City%20Profile.pdf>
- 70 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Marka,” 25 August 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Marca>
- 71 Cedric Barnes and Abdul Khalif, “Somalia: Why is Al-Shabaab Still a Potent Threat?” International Crisis Group, 11 February 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/somalia-why-al-shabaab-still-potent-threat>
- 72 BBC News, “Al-Shabab ‘Retakes’ Key Somalia Port City of Merca,” 5 February 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35502016>

## Environmental Concerns

Land degradation is a key environmental problem in Somalia and is closely linked to desertification and unsustainable agricultural practices, such as overgrazing and deforestation.<sup>73</sup> Desertification, both a natural and man-made, disrupts social institutions and destroys the livelihoods of millions.<sup>74,75</sup> Illegal dumping of toxic waste, illegal fishing, and marine and coastal pollution are other environmental concerns.<sup>76,77,78</sup>

Biodiversity is also threatened. The Somali wild ass, the hirola antelope, and the hamadryas baboon are critically endangered, and a number of endemic bird, fish, mammal, and plant species are endangered or vulnerable.<sup>79,80</sup>

## Natural Hazards

Since most of Somalia is arid and semiarid, droughts and flooding are the main threats confronting the country. A five-year drought that ended with flash floods in the autumn of 2009 was followed by the drought of 2011–2012, which was the worst in 60 years and resulted in 260,000 deaths in the Horn of Africa.<sup>81</sup> Between 2015 and 2019, the El Niño phenomenon worsened drought conditions throughout the country, displacing over one million Somalis. Widespread famine and malnutrition, along with cholera and measles outbreaks, are some of the secondary hazards accompanying severe droughts.<sup>82,83,84</sup>

Earthquake hazards are classified as medium in northern Somalia and low throughout the rest of the country. The risk of a tsunami is classified as medium along the coast.<sup>85</sup> When the 2004 tsunami reached East Africa, Somalia was the country worst affected, with 289 reported deaths and hundreds of buildings destroyed.<sup>86,87</sup>

- 73 United Nations Environment Programme, “The State of the Environment in Somalia: A Desk Study,” December 2005, [https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb\\_somalia.pdf](https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb_somalia.pdf)
- 74 UNPO, “Somaliland: The Devastating Effects of Desertification,” 7 March 2017, <https://unpo.org/article/19922>
- 75 United Nations Environment Programme, “Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/where-we-work/somalia>
- 76 Chris Milton, “Somalia Used as Toxic Dumping Ground,” *Ecologist*, 1 March 2009, <https://theecologist.org/2009/mar/01/somalia-used-toxic-dumping-ground>
- 77 Tristan McConnell, “Somali Pirates’ Rise Linked to Illegal Fishing and Toxic Dumping,” *PRI*, 16 March 2012, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-03-16/somali-pirates-rise-linked-illegal-fishing-and-toxic-dumping>
- 78 United Nations Environment Programme, “The State of the Environment in Somalia: A Desk Study,” December 2005, [https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb\\_somalia.pdf](https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb_somalia.pdf)
- 79 Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, “Horn of Africa,” n.d., <https://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/horn-africa/species>
- 80 World Atlas, “Somalia’s Endangered Mammals,” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/somalia-s-endangered-mammals.html>
- 81 GFDRR, “Somalia,” 2017, <https://www.gfdr.org/en/somalia>
- 82 Relief Web, “Somalia: Drought—2015–2–19,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som>
- 83 Relief Web, “Somalia: 2019 Drought Response Plan,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 20 May 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2019-drought-response-plan>
- 84 United Nations Environment Programme, “Mapping the Devastation of Somalia’s Drought,” 30 January 2018, <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/mapping-devastation-somalias-drought>
- 85 Think Hazard, “Somalia: Earthquakes,” n.d., <http://thinkhazard.org/en/report/226-somalia/EQ>
- 86 Martin Plaut, “Tsunami: Somalia’s Slow Recovery,” *BBC News*, 26 December 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4560246.stm>
- 87 UNICEF, “After the Tsunami Somalia is the Worst-Hit Country in Africa,” 5 January 2005, [https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index\\_24757.html](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index_24757.html)

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 1 | Geography, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Somalia has the longest coastline of any African country.  True  False
2. *Flooding is one of the main natural hazards in Somalia and often yields disastrous results.*  True  False
3. The greatest temperature extremes occur in the south of Somalia.  True  False
4. Somalia has no permanent rivers.  True  False
5. Hargeysa (Hargeisa) is Somalia's southernmost city and the regional capital of the Banadir region.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 1 | Geography, Assessment Answers

1. True:  
With the Indian Ocean marking its eastern border and the Gulf of Aden marking its northern border, Somalia is the country with the longest coastline in Africa (3,025 km or 1,880 mi).
2. True:  
Somalia's climatic conditions include recurring droughts and floods that destroy crops, leading to widespread famine and epidemics. Flash floods and river floods, caused by heavy rainfall, damage water sources, sanitation facilities, and other critical infrastructure and displace thousands of people.
3. False:  
The greatest temperature extremes occur in the north when winter months bring below-freezing temperatures to the highlands. Summer temperatures in the Gulf of Aden's coastal region rise to more than 45°C (113°F).
4. False:  
Somalia has two permanent rivers, the Jubba and the Shabelle. Both rivers originate in Ethiopia and flow through the southwest of Somalia into the Indian Ocean. The Shabelle is the longest river.
5. False:  
Hargeysa lies in the northwest interior of Somaliland, about 1,335 m (4,377 ft) above sea level. In 1991, Hargeysa became the de facto capital of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland.



## Chapter 2 | History



Paintings inside the Laas Geel caves near Hargeisa in Somalia  
Wikimedia / Abdullah Geelah

### Introduction

The Horn of Africa has been home to the Somali people for thousands of years. Located at the crossroads of the Middle East and Africa, Somali territories were claimed and controlled by different clans, tribes, kingdoms, sultanates, and colonizing empires. In 1960, the former British and Italian Somaliland territories united to establish Somalia. Although united in independence, the two regions functioned as two separate states, and military leaders pushed for separation. There was also a drive to include surrounding areas that had large populations of ethnic Somalis, such as Ogaden in Ethiopia and parts of Kenya and Djibouti.<sup>1,2</sup>

In 1969, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre took power and established a government based on the political ideology of “scientific socialism” and the Quran. Barre imposed autocratic rule through a personality cult and outlawed clan loyalties while relying on his own clan. Barre’s relations with the Soviet Union ended following the defeat of the Somali army at the Ogaden War by an Ethiopians army supported by Russian-Cuban forces. In

1 Countries and Their Cultures, “Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html>

2 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, “Country Facts,” n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>

1990, members of a rebel group mainly composed of Hawiye clansmen stormed Mogadishu. Barre escaped to Nigeria, and Muhammad Ali Mahdi was appointed president.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>

Throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, a brutal civil war engulfed Somalia. What started as a clan-based conflict soon evolved into an Islamist insurgency. The UN and the African Union supported Efforts to transition to a national or federal state but were opposed by insurgent groups, including the Islamist al-Shabaab. During the long civil war, the independent entities of Somaliland and Puntland were founded.<sup>6, 7, 8</sup>

In 2012, Somalia completed a political transition, swore in its first formal parliament, and held presidential elections for the first time since 1967. In 2017, the Federal Government of Somalia held a national election with voters choosing a new parliament, as well as a new president—Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed.<sup>9, 10, 11</sup> Efforts to stabilize the country are still ongoing with significant international support.<sup>12, 13</sup>

## Ancient History

Somalia was known to the ancient Egyptians as the Land of Punt (“God’s Land”). It was the destination of Cushite peoples who migrated from the Ethiopian and Kenyan highlands to the coast.<sup>14, 15, 16</sup> Other early occupants of the region were the tribal Bantu and foraging Wa-Boni (Boni) peoples.<sup>17, 18</sup> Somalia’s long coastline has drawn seafarers from regions beyond Africa. Well before the first century CE, Persian, Arab, and Asian merchant ships reached Somalia’s shores.<sup>19, 20, 21</sup>

3 Richard Greenfield, “Obituary: Mohamed Said Barre,” *Independent*, 3 January 1995, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-mohamed-said-barre-1566452.html>

4 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, “Country Facts,” n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>

5 Stratfor, “The Rise and Fall of the Somali State,” 8 December 2016, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/rise-and-fall-somali-state>

6 Sally Healy and Mark Bradbury, “Endless War: A Brief History of the Somali Conflict,” *Conciliation Resources*, February 2010, <https://www.c-r.org/accord/somalia/endless-war-brief-history-somali-conflict>

7 Global Security, “Somalia Civil War,” n.d., <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

8 Annabel Lee Hogg, “Timeline: Somalia, 1991–2008,” *Atlantic*, December 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/12/timeline-somalia-1991-2008/307190/>

9 Sulaiman Momodu, “Somalia Rising from the Ashes,” *Africa Renewal*, April 2016, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2016/somalia-rising-ashes>

10 U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Relations with Somalia,” 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>

11 BBC News, “Somalia Country Profile,” 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094503>

12 Stratfor, “The Rise and Fall of the Somali State,” 8 December 2016, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/rise-and-fall-somali-state>

13 UNSOM, “Joint Press Statement: Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations,” 30 January 2019, <https://unsom.unmissions.org/joint-press-statement-federal-government-somalia-and-united-nations>

14 Margaret Castagno, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975), 48, 128.

15 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Origins, Migrations, and Settlement,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/3.htm>

16 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, “Country Facts,” n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>

17 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Origins, Migrations, and Settlement,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/3.htm>

18 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: Before Partition: Peoples of the Coasts and Hinterland,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia>

19 “Somalia: Nationality,” in *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East: L to Z*, ed. Jamie Stokes, (New York: Infobase Publishing [Facts on File], 2009), 640.

20 Paul Halsall, ed., “Ancient History Sourcebook: The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century,” *Fordham University*, October 2000, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/periplus.asp>

21 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Coastal Towns,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/4.htm>

## Coastal Trade and the Emergence of Islam

As trade along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean increased, towns and ports appeared on the coast. By the seventh century CE, early followers of the Prophet Muhammad, fleeing persecution in Arabia, arrived in the Horn of Africa. Arabs and Persians established trading posts where Somalis could export goods such as ghee (clarified butter), ostrich feathers, and plant gums. The port cities of Zeila and Merca became transit points for slaves.<sup>22, 23.</sup>  
<sup>24</sup>Yemeni Qurayshi immigrants settled at Zeila, and by the 10th century, Islam had taken root as far as the coastal cities of Merca and Baraawe.<sup>25, 26, 27</sup>

The 11th to the 13th centuries witnessed the emergence of Muslim patriarchs who formed the Daarood and Isaaq clans.<sup>28, 29, 30</sup> Islam spread further when Arab immigrants and indigenous Cushites intermarried, multiplied, and settled throughout Somalia. For the next several centuries, Somalis fought in religious wars against Christian Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) on behalf of regional Muslim kingdoms.<sup>31, 32, 33</sup>

## External Interests, Internal Divisions

During 1498 and 1499, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama sailed along Somalia's coast on his way to and from India.<sup>34, 35, 36</sup> The Portuguese later traded in Somali coastal towns, as did Turkish merchants. The Portuguese and the Turks became involved in the 16th-century power struggle between Ethiopia and Ahmad Gran ("the Left-Handed"), leader of the Islamic state of Adal.<sup>37, 38</sup> With Portuguese help, Ethiopia defeated Gran, who was supported by the Ottoman Turks.<sup>39</sup> In later centuries, the Ottoman Turks claimed authority over the

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- 22 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Exploration: Early Activity on the Coasts," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Daily-life-and-social-customs#ref37743>
- 23 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Coastal Towns," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/4.htm>
- 24 Countries and Their Cultures, "Somalia," n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html>
- 25 Richard K. P. Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982), 5457A.
- 26 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Before Partition: Peoples of the Coasts and Hinterland," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Daily-life-and-social-customs#ref37746>
- 27 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, "Country Facts," n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>
- 28 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Before Partition: The Great Somali Migrations," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations>
- 29 Said S. Samatar, "Chapter 1: Coastal Towns," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/4.htm>
- 30 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, "Country Facts," n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>
- 31 Susan M. Hassig, *Somalia* (Cultures of the World Series) (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2007), 20.
- 32 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Before Partition: The Great Somali Migrations," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations>
- 33 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Coastal Towns," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/4.htm>
- 34 Roland Oliver, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa: From c. 1050 to c. 1600*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 227.
- 35 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Emergence of Adal," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/5.htm>
- 36 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Before Partition: Somali Clans and Foreign Traders," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37748>
- 37 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Adal," 25 January 1999, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Adal>
- 38 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Before Partition: Somali Clans and Foreign Traders," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37748>
- 39 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Emergence of Adal," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/5.htm>

Horn from the north.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Zanzibar on the coast of what would later become Kenya laid claim to parts of southern Somalia.<sup>41, 42, 43</sup>

## European and African Colonization

Europeans began to explore Somalia in the 19th century. In 1839, to support trade with East Asia, the British established a refueling port in Aden, on the Yemeni coast. Their garrison relied on meat imported from Somalia. During the construction of the Suez Canal, France and Italy established refueling stations on the African coast of the Bab el Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. An Italian company later sublet the southern Somali coast from the British East Africa Company, which in turn had leased the territory from the Sultan of Zanzibar. Egypt and Ethiopia joined the Europeans in their “Scramble for Africa” that characterized much of the 19th century.<sup>44, 45, 46</sup>

Egypt occupied the seaports of Berbera and Bulhar and later handed control of its Somali territories to Britain in exchange for aid against a revolt in Sudan. When Egypt left the region, Ethiopia’s Emperor Menelik II seized the Muslim city of Hārer in the Ogaden highlands and, with Italian assistance, kept it from the Somalis. The Emperor resisted European colonization and later gained control of Somali clan lands in the interior. Italy would regain much of the Ogaden region by the 1930s.<sup>47, 48, 49</sup>

The indigenous religious leader Mohamed Abdullah Hassan was an early advocate of Somali nationalism. He led his followers, the Dervishes, in a 20-year rebellion against British, Italian, and Ethiopian colonizers. The uprising ended following the bombing of the Dervish base in 1920.<sup>50, 51</sup> A member of the Saalixiya Sufi order, Hassan was known to Somalis as a Sayidd—a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. His movement combined Islam and anti-imperialism and sought to overcome clan differences. Hassan wanted Somalis to recognize that they shared a common heritage and a common destiny. To this day, Hassan continues to represent a national identity for many Somalis.<sup>52, 53, 54, 55</sup>

40 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: Before Partition,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Daily-life-and-social-customs#ref37745>

41 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: Before Partition: Somali Clans and Foreign Traders,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37748>

42 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Sultanate of Zanzibar,” 17 July 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sultanate-of-Zanzibar>

43 Arago, “Somalia,” n.d., [https://arago.si.edu/category\\_2041523.html](https://arago.si.edu/category_2041523.html)

44 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: The Imperial Partition,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37749>

45 David D. Laitin, *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience* (University of Chicago Press, 1977), 45–48.

46 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, “Country Facts,” n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>

47 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: The Imperial Partition,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37749>

48 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Imperial Partition,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/9.htm>

49 A. Adu Boahen, ed., *General History of Africa, Vol. VII, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935* (UNESCO: 1985, reprinted 2000), 82.

50 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: The Imperial Partition,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37749>

51 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Dervish Resistance to Colonial Occupation,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/10.htm>

52 D. Anthony Low and Harold G. Marcus, “Eastern Africa: The Birth of Somali Nationalism,” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 12 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/eastern-Africa>

53 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: The Imperial Partition,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/The-great-Somali-migrations#ref37749>

54 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Dervish Resistance to Colonial Occupation,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress), 1992, <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/10.htm>

55 David D. Laitin, *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience* (University of Chicago Press, 1977), 73–74.

## World War II and Its Aftermath

In 1936, Italy annexed Eritrea, Ethiopia, and southern Somalia, surrounding the British and French Somaliland colonies. In 1940, Italy declared war on the United Kingdom and seized British Somaliland by force. In 1941, the British recaptured British Somaliland, as well as Italian Abyssinia (Ethiopia/Eritrea), gaining much of Italian Somaliland in the process.<sup>56</sup>

In 1947, Italy formally renounced its claim to territorial possession in Somalia, and the British military administered Somali territories with an eye toward self-government. In 1948, Britain handed over the Ogaden region and neighboring Somali territories to Ethiopia. In 1949, the United Nations directed Italy to administer a 10-year international trusteeship toward independence by 1960. In British Somaliland, the 1960 elections established a legislative assembly that requested independence to prepare for unification with Italian Somaliland.<sup>57, 58</sup>

## Independence

British Somaliland gained independence on 26 June 1960, and when Italian Somaliland was granted independence on 1 July 1960, the two former colonies joined to form the United Somali Republic. A constitutional conference from April of that year established Mogadishu as the capital, instituting a southern-dominated central government. A year later, the people of Somalia adopted their first constitution. Pan-Somalism, the idea of unifying all Somali communities in Somalia—French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti), northeastern Kenya, and eastern Ethiopia—dominated the first years of foreign policy.<sup>59, 60</sup>

In 1961, Aden Abdullah Osman was elected to a six-year term as president of Somalia in the country's first election. In 1967, he was defeated in the presidential election by Abdirashid Ali Shermarke and was the first postcolonial head of state to transfer power peacefully to a successor.<sup>61, 62</sup>

Somalis' objections to border demarcations with Kenya and Ethiopia by the colonial powers developed into an armed insurgency on the Kenyan border in 1963. Diplomatic relations with Britain soon after ceased, and a year later, war broke out in the Ogaden region.<sup>63, 64</sup>

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56 Bamber Gascoigne, "History of Somalia," History World, n.d., <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

57 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Somalia During World War II," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/12.htm>

58 Bamber Gascoigne, "History of Somalia," History World, n.d., <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

59 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: The Somali Republic: Pan-Somalism," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Revolt-in-British-Somaliland#ref37755>

60 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: From Independence to Revolution: Pan-Somalism," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/15.htm>

61 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Aden Abdullah Osman," 4 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aden-Abdullah-Osman>

62 BBC News, "Somalia Profile – Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

63 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

64 Timothy J. Stapleton, "Ethiopia—Somalia conflicts (1960s–2000s)," *The Encyclopedia of War*, 13 November 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444338232.wbeow187>

## Coup d'État

On 15 October 1969, President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, former prime minister and then sitting president, was assassinated by a policeman. On 21 October, the military seized power and deposed the civilian government. The prime minister, former President Aden Abdulle Osman, and members of his government and other politicians were arrested. The army, supported by the police, abolished the parliament, suspended the constitution, and banned all political parties and social organizations. A new governing body, the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) was established, with Major General Mohamed Siad Barre as leader. Somalia was renamed the Somali Democratic Republic. For Siad Barre, the removal of the pro-Western government was paramount for the implementation of Soviet-Style socialism.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup>

## The Government of General Siad Barre

The SRC worked to consolidate power by decreasing clan influence on local government. Government-appointed “peacekeepers” replaced local tribal heads, and communities replaced lineages as political and social centers.<sup>68</sup> <sup>69</sup> President Barre’s official Marxist ideology, called “scientific socialism,” incorporated Islam, socialism based on Marxist principles, and the idea of community development through self-reliance. Large-scale projects to transform Somali society included the nationalization of industries and firms, health development, and the standardization of written Somali based on the Roman alphabet followed by a nationwide literacy campaign.<sup>70</sup>

Under Barre, Somalia became a client state of the Soviet Union.<sup>71</sup> The Soviets were interested in increasing their naval and military presence in the strategically important Horn of Africa, and Somalia was interested in economic and military aid. However, in 1974, the Soviet Union began to provide support for Somalia’s rival, Ethiopia. When Somalis took over the border region of Ogaden in 1977–78, Moscow supplied Cuban troops and Soviet advisors to Ethiopia, which resulted in Somalia’s eventual defeat.<sup>72</sup> The Soviet reversal led the Somali government to abandon its socialist ideology and turn to the West.<sup>73, 74, 75</sup> In 1980, U.S. forces gained access to the port of Berbera, which had previously been a Soviet naval and airbase.<sup>76</sup>

65 Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, “Who Assassinated the Somali President in October 1969? The Cold War, the Clan Connection, or the Coup d’État,” *African Security* 10, no. 2 (2017):131-154, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2017.1305861>

66 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: From Independence to Revolution: Coup d’État,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/20.htm>

67 Permanent Mission of the Somali Republic to the United Nations, “Country Facts,” n.d., <https://www.un.int/somalia/somalia/country-facts>

68 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: The Somali Republic: The Era of Scientific Socialism,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Revolt-in-British-Somaliland#ref37756>

69 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: The Revolutionary Regime: Supreme Revolutionary Council,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/22.htm>

70 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: History: The Somali Republic: The Era of Scientific Socialism,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Revolt-in-British-Somaliland#ref37756>

71 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: The Revolutionary Regime: Siad Barre and Scientific Socialism,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/24.htm>

72 Thomas P. Ofcansky and LaVerle Berry, eds., “The Derg, the Soviet Union, and the Communist World,” in *Ethiopia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1991), <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/137.htm>

73 Don Oberdorfer, “The Superpowers and the Ogaden War,” *Washington Post*, 5 March 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/03/05/the-superpowers-and-the-ogaden-war/00f60ef2-01b4-4cd3-8c5f-e545df388def/>

74 Global Security, “1980s Ethiopian Conflicts,” n.d., <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia4.htm>

75 Said S. Samatar, “Somalia: History: Relations with the United States,” in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/80.htm>

76 Herman J. Cohen, “Somalia and the United States: A Long and Troubled History,” *All Africa*, 21 January 2002, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200201210455.html>

At the end of the Ogaden conflict, an influx of some 80,000 refugees from Ethiopia changed the ethnic makeup of northern Somalia.<sup>77</sup> After a failed coup, some army officers fled to Ethiopia and formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) in 1979. Rejecting centralized government, exiled Isaaq clan members formed the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the United Kingdom in 1981, and Hawiye clan members from central Somalia formed the United Somali Congress (USC) in 1989, with bases in Ethiopia.<sup>78</sup>

Central government attempts to quell unrest caused greater regional turmoil, which deteriorated to a full-blown civil war by the mid-1980s. Armed conflicts between the government and rebel groups further divided Somalis along clan lines and worsened the economic crisis, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti.<sup>79</sup>

In 1990, Barre's government proposed last-minute reforms, including an end to single-party rule, a new constitution, and new elections. Nevertheless, combined SNM and USC forces pushed Barre from power on 27 January 1991.<sup>80</sup> As Barre went into exile, the central government in Mogadishu collapsed. The SNM took control over the former British Somaliland, and in May 1991, declared it an independent nation—the Republic of Somaliland. Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia remained under the control of the USC, led by General Muhammad Farah Aideed.<sup>81, 82, 83</sup>

## Civil War and Famine

Fighting continued after the collapse of the central government. While the SNM remained united in defense of Somaliland, the USC split into two groups: the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA) led by Ali Mahdi Muhammad and the USC led by General Muhammad Farrah Aideed. Fighting between two warring clan lords in the south sank the country further into chaos. An estimated 350,000 civilian deaths from starvation, disease, and violence prompted a U.S.-led coalition to intervene in 1992–93. Operation Restore Hope involved more than 35,000 U.S. troops.<sup>84, 85, 86</sup>

In October 1993, after Somali fighters led by General Muhammad Farah Aideed shot down two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters resulting in the deaths of 18 U.S. service members, the United States, and European nations began to reevaluate their deployments in the region. In 1994, the United States ended its mission to Somalia, and in 1995, UN troops left the country, having failed to accomplish their mission.<sup>87, 88, 89</sup>

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- 77 Assefaw Bariagaber, *Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 110.
- 78 United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Somalia: Somali National Movement from Its Inception through the Present," SOM99001.ZLA, 25 August 1999, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a6b5f.html>
- 79 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Somalia's Difficult Decade, 1980-90," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/27.htm>
- 80 Said S. Samatar, "Somalia: History: Harrying of the Hawiye," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/31.htm>
- 81 The Republic of Somaliland includes the Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool regions.
- 82 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Civil War," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war>
- 83 BBC, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>
- 84 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Civil War," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war>
- 85 Annel Lee Hogg, "Timeline: Somalia, 1991–2008," *Atlantic*, December 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/12/timeline-somalia-1991-2008/307190/>
- 86 Global Security, "Operation Restore Hope," n.d., [https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/restore\\_hope.htm](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/restore_hope.htm)
- 87 BBC News, "Somalia Country Profile," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094503>
- 88 Office of the Historian, Department of State, "Somalia, 1992–1993," n.d., <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/somalia>
- 89 Somalia UNOSOM II, "Background," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unosom2backgr2.html>

Reconciliation attempts hosted by the UN, Ethiopia, and other regional states throughout the 1990s failed to overcome regionalism. In 1996, the assassination of warlord Muhammad Aided prompted a ceasefire, but fighting continued as his son, Hussein, vowed revenge. The country eventually broke into four parts: Somaliland in the northwest; Puntland in the northeast; regional forces south of Mogadishu under Ali Mahdi; and forces south of the capital under Hussein Muhammad Aided.<sup>90, 91, 92</sup>

## Transitional Governments and the Islamist Insurgency

A major regional conference in 2000 held in Djibouti resulted in plans for a transitional national government that would create a permanent government to reunite all of Somalia. However, Somali warlords refused to support a transitional government.<sup>93</sup> Peace talks held in 2002 in Kenya led to the establishment of another transitional government. In 2004, Somali leaders reached a consensus, and a new transitional parliament was inaugurated in Kenya.<sup>94, 95</sup> In October 2004, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was elected the first president of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was founded with the assistance of the United Nations.<sup>96</sup>

In the summer of 2006, militias loyal to the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an organization of loosely-associated Islamic courts, took control of Mogadishu and parts of the south after defeating clan warlords. In December 2006, Ethiopia reentered Somalia to defend the TFG from the ICU. Hard-liners in the Islamic government declared holy war against Ethiopia. The United Nations Security Council approved a peacekeeping mission to Somalia (AMISOM), which included 8,000 soldiers from neighboring countries. In December 2006, the TFG dealt the ICU a resounding defeat, leading to the breakup of the ICU and the eventual emergence of the militant groups al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam. In January 2007, after gaining control of Mogadishu, President Abdullahi entered the city for the first time since 2004.<sup>97, 98, 99</sup>

Abdullahi was forced to resign in December 2008 after a power struggle with the prime minister over the prospect of reconciliation with moderate Islamists. Sharif Sheik Ahmed, also known as the father of Modern Somalia, was elected president.<sup>100</sup> Coming from a long line of religious leaders, Sheik Ahmed was seen as a moderate Islamist leader in the ICU during their six months in power in 2006. Between 2007 and 2008, Ahmed was the leader in exile of the Islamist Eritrea-based Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia.<sup>101</sup> Al-Shabaab refused to recognize the

90 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Civil War," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war>

91 Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, UN Development Programme, "Horn of Africa: The Monthly Review," 30 August 1996, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue\\_web/hoa0896.htm](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/hoa0896.htm)

92 Annabel Lee Hogg, "Timeline: Somalia, 1991–2008," *Atlantic*, December 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/12/timeline-somalia-1991-2008/307190/>

93 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia: History: Attempts at Peace," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 19 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia/Civil-war#ref242751>

94 Global Security, "Somalia Civil War—Southern Somalia," 15 August 2006, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia-south.htm>

95 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

96 Mohammed Ibrahim, "Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, Former Somali Strongman, Dies at 77," *New York Times*, 23 March 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/24/world/africa/abdullahi-yusuf-ahmed-ex-strongman-of-somalia-dies-at-77.html>

97 Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Islamic Courts Union," Stanford University, n.d., <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/islamic-courts-union>

98 Annabel Lee Hogg, "Timeline: Somalia, 1991–2008," *Atlantic*, December 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/12/timeline-somalia-1991-2008/307190/>

99 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

100 David McKittrick, "Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed: Warlord Who as President Failed to Restore Order to Somalia," *Independent*, 31 March 2012, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/abdullahi-yusuf-ahmed-warlord-who-as-president-failed-to-restore-order-to-somalia-7604011.html>

101 BBC News, "Profile: Somalia's President Ahmed," 3 February 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7865808.stm>



new government and vowed to form an Islamic state in Somalia based on Sharia law. In January 2009, Ethiopian forces withdrew from Somalia. In 2010, al-Shabaab declared its affiliation with al-Qaeda.<sup>102, 103</sup>

In 2011, The United Nations Political Office for Somalia hosted a constitutional conference, producing the Garowe Principles, which prolonged the transition to a permanent political order for Somalia until 2012.<sup>104, 105</sup>

In August 2012, Somalia swore in its first formal parliament in more than 20 years, ending an eight-year transitional period. A month later, in the first presidential election since 1967, the parliament elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president over the incumbent Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. African Union and government forces recaptured the port of Merca, and later entered the port of Kismayo, the last major city held by al-Shabaab.<sup>106</sup>

In 2013, the United States formally recognized the new Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the first such act since 1991. In February 2017, the FGS completed its first national electoral process since the 2012 transition and selected a new federal parliament. The parliament elected former prime minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as Farmajo, as president.<sup>107, 108</sup> The new president declared war on al-Shabaab and offered the group's fighters a 60-day amnesty period. The group rejected the offer and declared war the following day.<sup>109</sup>

## Somaliland and Puntland

Somaliland, which was a British protectorate, declared independence from Somalia in 1991, after the SNM and other insurgent groups ousted Barre. In 2001, more than 97% of the population of Somaliland voted to endorse a new constitution. Since 2003, Somaliland has held democratic elections accompanied by peaceful transitions of power. In 2017, Muse Bihi Abdi, a retired military pilot and former interior minister, was elected president, succeeding Ahmed Silanyo. Somaliland's claim of independence is not recognized by Somalia or any foreign government.<sup>110, 111, 112</sup>

Puntland, an arid region in northeast Somalia, declared itself an autonomous state in August 1998. Puntland does not seek independence but prefers to remain within a federal Somalia. Between 2005 and 2012, pirates operating out of Puntland posed a significant threat to international shipping off the coast of Somalia. The current president of Puntland is U.S.-trained economist Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, who was also prime minister of Somalia from 2011 to 2012. Mohamed Ali is the fourth of Puntland's presidents, all of whom were selected by legislators who, in turn, were chosen by clan elders.<sup>113, 114, 115</sup>

102 VOA, "Somalia President Sheikh Ahmed to Begin Process of Selecting Prime Minister," 2 November 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/archive/somalia-president-sheikh-ahmed-begin-process-selecting-prime-minister>

103 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

104 Osman D. Osman, "The Garowe Principles: A Solution or a Deepening of the Somali Crisis?" Pambazuka, 19 January 2012, <https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/garowe-principles-solution-or-deepening-somali-crisis>

105 Michael A. Weinstein, "Somalia: New Roadmap—The Garowe Principles," All Africa, 30 December 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201112300980.html>

106 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

107 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. relations with Somalia," 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>

108 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>

109 Counter Extremism Project, "Al-Shabaab," n.d., <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/al-shabab>

110 Claire Felter, "Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State," Council on Foreign Relations, 1 February 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/background/somaliland-horn-africas-breakaway-state>

111 BBC News, "Somaliland Profile," 14 December 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115069>

112 Jason Beaubien, "Somaliland Wants to Make One Thing Clear: It is NOT Somalia," NPR, 30 May 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/05/30/530703639/somaliland-wants-to-make-one-thing-clear-it-is-not-somalia>

113 BBC News, "Puntland Profile," 11 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14114727>

114 Hamza Mohamed, "Somalia's Puntland Picks a New President," Al Jazeera, 8 January 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/01/somalia-puntland-picks-new-president-201417114142532767.html>

115 BBC News, "New Puntland Head 'to End Piracy,'" 8 January 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7817810.stm>

## Recent Events

On 2 December 2018, the United States reestablished a permanent diplomatic presence in Somalia for the first time since the closure of its embassy in Mogadishu in January 1991.<sup>116</sup>

Since the beginning of 2019, al-Shabaab has carried out deadly attacks on civilian targets, military installations, and government buildings in Somalia.<sup>117, 118, 119</sup> In July, a female suicide bomber detonated herself in Mogadishu, killing several people, including the mayor of Mogadishu. The target of the attack was the new UN special envoy to Somalia.<sup>120</sup>

Al-Shabaab continues on its mission to overthrow the central government and establish an Islamic state in Somalia. The group is affiliated with al-Qaeda and maintains a strong presence in rural southern Somalia.<sup>121, 122</sup>

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- 116 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. relations with Somalia," 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>
- 117 Al Jazeera, "Somalia: Car Bomb Explodes Near Mogadishu Airport," 22 July 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/somalia-car-bomb-explodes-mogadishu-airport-190722105815535.html>
- 118 Harun Maruf, "Al-Shabaab Attack Kills 20 Somali Soldiers," VOA, 22 September 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/al-shabab-attack-kills-20-somali-soldiers>
- 119 Omar Nor and Zahid Mahmood, "3 People Killed in a Foiled Al-Shabaab Attack on a Somali Military Camp," CNN, 14 August 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/14/africa/somalia-military-base-foiled-attack-intl/index.html>
- 120 BBC News, "Abdirahman Omar Osman, Mogadishu Mayor, Dies After Suicide Bombing," 1 August 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49197036>
- 121 Claire Felter, Jonathan Masters, and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabaab," Council on Foreign Relations, 31 January 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab>
- 122 Seth G. Jones, Andrew M. Liepman, and Nathan Chandler, "Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Assessing the Campaign Against Al Shabaab," RAND Corporation, 2016, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1500/RR1539/RAND\\_RR1539.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1539/RAND_RR1539.pdf)

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 2 | History, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The British were the first Europeans to reach the coast of Somalia.  True  False
2. Mohamed Abdullah Hassan was a governor of British Somaliland who introduced social reforms to the region.  True  False
3. Arab Muslims arrived at the coast of Somalia shortly after the birth of Islam.  True  False
4. Somalia gained independence after a long civil war in 1948.  True  False
5. The United States does not recognize the government of Somalia and has no diplomatic mission in the country.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 2 | History, Assessment Answers

1. False:  
Between 1498 and 1499, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama sailed along Somalia's coast in search of gold and other commodities. The Portuguese later traded in coastal towns and became involved in the 16th-century power struggle with the Ottoman Turks and the leader of the Islamic state of Adal.
2. False:  
Mohamed Abdullah Hassan was an early advocate of Somali nationalism. His battles against the British and other foreign imperialists ended with the 1920 bombing of his base; he died later that same year of influenza.
3. True:  
Early followers of the Prophet Muhammad, fleeing persecution in Arabia, arrived in the Horn of Africa in the seventh century CE. By the 10th century, Islam had taken root in coastal cities as far south as Merca and Baraawe. Muslim patriarchs formed the Daarood and Isaaq clans between the 11th and 13th centuries.
4. False:  
After British Somaliland gained independence on 26 June 1960 and Italian Somaliland was granted independence on 1 July 1960, the two former colonies joined to form the Somali Republic.
5. False:  
The United States formally recognized the new Federal Government of Somalia in 2013, and in December 2018, the United States reestablished a permanent diplomatic presence there for the first time since the closure of its Mogadishu embassy in January 1991.

## Chapter 3 | Economy



A trader waits to sell fish inside Mogadishu's fish market in the Xamar Weyne district of the Somali capital  
Flickr / AMISOM Public Information

### Introduction

Somalia is one of the poorest and most socio-economically fragile countries in the world. Natural disasters such as droughts or floods and human factors such as political violence and the resulting population displacements mean that lasting progress is difficult to attain. The government has no control over monetary policy, and the lack of productive economic activity limits its ability to generate revenues.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, crime rates are high, and corruption is rampant—Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Somalia as the world's most corrupt country—all of which contributes to the continuous political instability that paints a picture of an uncertain future.<sup>2, 3</sup>

Over half of the population lives in extreme poverty (less than USD 1.90 a day in 2011) and depends on foreign remittances and international aid.<sup>4</sup> Unemployment is high everywhere. In Somaliland, the relatively peaceful self-governing region, only one-third of urban 15-to 55-year-old residents have work, and in the rural areas, only 26%

1 Heritage Foundation, "Somalia," Index of Economic Freedom, 2019, <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/somalia>

2 Transparency International. "Corruption Perception Index," 2018, <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

3 Global Economy, "Political Stability, Percent—Country Rankings," 2017, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb\\_political\\_stability/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/)

4 Trading Economics, "Somalia GDP Annual Growth Rate," 2018, <https://tradingeconomics.com/somalia/gdp-growth-annual>

of this segment of the population is employed. Half of the country's population is illiterate, life expectancy at birth is 55 years, and the fertility rate is among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5, 6, 7, 8</sup>

The agricultural sector dominates the economy. Exports account for 15% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Since agricultural production is mostly rain-fed, long and severe droughts wreak havoc on the agricultural sector. A large informal economy in the agriculture, construction, and telecommunication sectors functions through money transfer companies and generates an estimated USD 6 billion annually. However, concern about money laundering and terrorist financing drives Western banks to close accounts suspected of illegal activities.<sup>9, 10, 11</sup>

## Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of Somalia's economy. Livestock and crops are the main sources of economic activity.<sup>12</sup> About 70% of the land is considered agricultural—mostly permanent pasture—and 70% of the labor force is employed in agricultural activities such as herding and farming. Cultivated land accounts for less than 2% of the total land area, and forest covers 10% of the land. The contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP is estimated at 60%.<sup>13, 14</sup>

There are four agricultural zones in the country: a small northwestern area west of Hargeisa, where rainfed maize (corn) and sorghum are planted, and some livestock herding takes place; a much larger inter-riverine area between the Shabelle and Jubba river valleys, where rainfed and irrigated maize and sesame are the main cash crops; the Sorghum Belt in the southeastern part of the country supports rainfed sorghum and livestock production, and the cowpea Belt which stretches along the coast, the center, and parts of the south.<sup>15</sup>

Crop production performance is determined by the two main agricultural seasons: *gu* from April to June and *deyr* crop production from October to December.<sup>16</sup> In the last decade, poor rainy seasons followed by floods have devastated the country and created severe food shortages and famine.<sup>17</sup>

Before the civil war in the 1980–90s, bananas, sugarcane, and frankincense were the country's major commercial crops. Today, the most important crops are maize, sorghum, rice, and cowpeas. Farmers also grow vegetables,

5 World Bank, "Somalia," 19 April 2018, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/752311492188170790/mpo-som.pdf>

6 World Bank, "Somalia," 2019, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/somalia>

7 World Bank, "Somalia," 2017, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/somalia>

8 USAID, "USAID Administrator Mark Green Announces \$185 Million in Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Somalia," Press Release, 17 June 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/jun-17-2019-usaid-administrator-mark-green-announces-185-million-humanitarian>

9 Heritage Foundation, "Somalia," Index of Economic Freedom, 2019, <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/somalia>

10 World Bank, "Somalia," 19 April 2018, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/752311492188170790/mpo-som.pdf>

11 Global Economy, "Exports, Percent of GDP—Country Rankings," 2017, <https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/Exports/>

12 World Bank, "Agriculture Remains Key to Somalia's Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction," 28 March 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/03/28/agriculture-remains-key-to-somalias-economic-growth-and-poverty-reduction>

13 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," *The World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

14 Global Economy, "Percent Agricultural Land, Percent—Country Rankings," 2017, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/Percent\\_agricultural\\_land/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/Percent_agricultural_land/)

15 FAO, "Somali Agriculture: Building Drought Resilience," October 2012, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-as782e.pdf>

16 FAO, "Somali Agriculture: Building Drought Resilience," October 2012, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-as782e.pdf>

17 Lisa Schlein, "UN: Millions Could Face Severe Food Shortages as Drought Grips Somalia," VOA, 4 June 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/un-millions-could-face-severe-food-shortages-drought-grips-somalia>

beans, mangoes, and coconuts. After decades of war destroyed the banana sector, farmers are once again growing bananas for export, with new varieties tolerant to drought and parasites.<sup>18, 19</sup>

## Charcoal

Timber and charcoal make up a small part of agricultural production. Somalis who have no other economic options produce charcoal by burning wood in enclosed areas at high temperatures. The charcoal is sold to militias to transport to a port by truck or donkey cart. When it reaches the city, local businessmen find merchants who sell it in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. This unregulated industry supports local militias, destroys the acacia forests, increases deforestation, and pollutes the environment. Most charcoal is produced in the south and shipped to Mogadishu.<sup>20, 21</sup>

## Frankincense

*The Cal Madow Mountains of Somaliland are one of the few places in the world where frankincense trees grow in the wild. As the global demand for essential oils grows, harvesting these trees has become an important source of livelihood for local people. However, overharvesting is destroying many of the trees, and work injuries are becoming common.*<sup>22</sup>

## Livestock

*Nomadic pastoralists raise camels, sheep, goats, and cattle.* In 2014, more than 5 million livestock were exported from Somalia. Livestock contributes about 40% to GDP. It is considered the largest and most crucial sector of the Somaliland economy.<sup>23, 24, 25</sup> Somalia exports livestock to Egypt, Oman, Yemen, and other Gulf states, with Saudi Arabia as the largest importer. In 2018, Saudi Arabia lifted a two-year ban it had imposed on Somali livestock, following reports of an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever. That year, more than a million goats were exported to Saudi Arabia prior to the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>26</sup>

## Fisheries

With 3,300 km (2,050 mi) of coastline and two major rivers, sustainable fisheries can help mitigate food insecurity in Somalia, where over 300,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, and 1 million face severe food shortages. Traditional and subsistence fishing are the dominant types of fishing for Somalis, and fishermen are among the poorest and most marginalized members of society. Small-scale fishermen catch king and yellowfin tuna that migrate north to south and back along the east coast of Africa. Swordfish and lobsters are also caught off shore.

18 FAO, "Somali Agriculture: Building Drought Resilience," October 2012, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-as782e.pdf>

19 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," *The World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

20 Zach Baxterm, "Somalia's Coal Industry," Mandala Project, May 2007, <http://mandalaprojects.com/ice/ice-cases/somalia-coal.htm>

21 Harry Holmes, "Nairobi Terror Group Funded by \$7 Million of Illegal Charcoal," Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 18 January 2018, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/9137-nairobi-terror-group-funded-by-7-million-of-illegal-charcoal>

22 Irene Banos Ruiz, "The Disappearing Frankincense Forests," *Deutsche Welle*, 28 December 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-disappearing-frankincense-forests/a-36923634-0>

23 OEC, "Somalia," 2017, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/som/>

24 FAO, "Somalia Livestock Export," 2014, <http://www.fao.org/resources/infographics/infographics-details/en/c/284952/>

25 Muhumed Mohamed Muhumed and Abdiqadir M. Yonis, "The Future of Somaliland Livestock Exports: Examining the Sustainability of Livestock Trade," *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics*, 5, no. 8 (2018), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328319505\\_The\\_Future\\_of\\_Somaliland\\_Livestock\\_Exports\\_Examining\\_the\\_Sustainability\\_of\\_Livestock\\_Trade\\_International\\_Journal\\_of\\_Management\\_Accounting\\_and\\_Economics\\_Vol\\_5\\_No\\_8\\_2018\\_With\\_Abdiqadir\\_M\\_Yonis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328319505_The_Future_of_Somaliland_Livestock_Exports_Examining_the_Sustainability_of_Livestock_Trade_International_Journal_of_Management_Accounting_and_Economics_Vol_5_No_8_2018_With_Abdiqadir_M_Yonis)

26 Abdulkadir Khalif, "Saudi Arabia Lifts Ban on Somalia Livestock," *East African*, 3 July 2018, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Saudi-Arabia-lifts-Somalia-livestock-ban/2560-4644498-btrqap/index.html>

The unsafe vessels that these fishermen have used in the past are slowly being replaced with newly designed fishing boats with the help of the EU and the UN. Fishing aggregating devices, which are objects such as buoys or floats that are used to attract coastal and ocean fish are now being deployed along the coast, and experts from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization are providing training in sustainable fishing methods.<sup>27, 28</sup>

In 2018, Somalia began issuing fishing licenses to Chinese fishing vessels to operate in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of its coastal water—the first 24 nautical miles from the shore are reserved for Somali fishermen—raising over USD 1 million in a year.<sup>29</sup> The fishing sector still remains underdeveloped due to a lack of skills among fishermen: a lack of boats, fishing gears, cold storage, and processing facilities; a lack of regulatory frameworks; and a lack of good roads to transport fresh fish to markets.<sup>30</sup> In order to increase agricultural production, Somalia's agriculture sector needs to be mechanized, its irrigation systems and water catchments have to be rebuilt, and access to seeds, fertilizers, farm tools, and storage facilities should be improved.<sup>31</sup>

## Industry

Somalia has a small industrial sector that accounts for 7.5% of GDP.<sup>32</sup> During the civil war, industrial plants were looted, and the machinery sold as scrap metal. In recent years, with the help of remittances from Somalis living abroad, many small-scale plants have opened. The current industrial sector is based mostly on processing agricultural products, including refining sugar, canning meat, tanning leather, and processing milk and oilseed. Factories in the Mogadishu area manufacture pasta, mineral water, and confections. Other small industries include textiles, handicrafts, printing, plastic bags, foam mattresses and pillows, detergent and soap, aluminum, and stone processing.<sup>33, 34, 35</sup>

### Telecommunication

In 2000, Somalia became the last country in Africa to gain internet access. Today, Somalia's telecommunications industry is one of Africa's best. Telecommunication firms provide wireless services in most major cities and offer the lowest international call rates on the continent. Local companies partnered with international corporations such as ITT and Sprint, increasing competition and subsequently leading to better service.<sup>36, 37, 38</sup> In 2017, the government signed a cooperation agreement with the International Telecommunications Union to help develop its telecommunication sector, leading to parliament approving the National Communications Act, which regulates the industry.<sup>39</sup>

27 FAO, "Rehabilitating the Fisheries Sector in Somalia," Blue Growth Blog, 2015, <http://www.fao.org/blogs/blue-growth-blog/rehabilitating-the-fisheries-sector-in-somalia/en/>

28 Kaija Hurlburt and Roberta Spivak, "The Fishing Sector in Somalia/Somaliland," Shuraako, January 2013, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/The%20Fishing%20Sector%20in%20SomaliaSomaliland.pdf>

29 World Bank, "Somalia Issues Fishing Licenses: Fees will Help Develop Fisheries Sector," 7 March 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2019/03/07/somalia-issues-fishing-licenses-fees-will-help-develop-fisheries-sector>

30 Nimo Jirdeh, "The Somali Fisheries Industry, A Potential Gold-Mine," OXFAM Somalia, 30 September 2015, <https://www.oxfamblogs.org/eastafrica/?p=8080>

31 FAO, "Somali Agriculture: Building Drought Resilience," October 2012, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-as782e.pdf>

32 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," in *World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

33 Economy Watch, "Somalia Industry Sectors," 9 April 2010, [http://www.economywatch.com/world\\_economy/somalia/industry-sector-industries.html](http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/somalia/industry-sector-industries.html)

34 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, "Industrial and Manufacturing," n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/industrial/>

35 Afriways, "Somalia—Security Printing," 2009, <http://www.afriways.com/Countries/Somalia/SecurityPrinting.html>

36 Afriways, "Somalia—Telecommunications," 2006, <http://www.afriways.com/Countries/Somalia/Telecommunications.html>

37 Economy Watch, "Somalia Industry Sectors," 9 April 2010, [http://www.economywatch.com/world\\_economy/somalia/industry-sector-industries.html](http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/somalia/industry-sector-industries.html)

38 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, "Industrial and Manufacturing," n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/industrial/>

39 XinhuaNet, "Somalia Signs Deal with ITU to Develop Telecom," 14 October 2017, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/14/c\\_136679912.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/14/c_136679912.htm)



## Mineral processing

The mineral industry produces small volumes of gemstones and salt. There are unexploited deposits of feldspar, gypsum, manganese, iron ore, kaolin, limestone, quartz, silica sand, tantalum, tin, and uranium. Ownership of mineral rights for the region of Somaliland is under the East African Mining Corp.<sup>40, 41</sup>

## Energy

Somalia has 200 billion cubic ft of proven natural gas reserves and no hydrocarbon production. The World Bank has ranked Somalia as a top prospective producer of oil. Seismic surveys suggest that Somalia has large oil reserves along the Indian Ocean coast and that total offshore deposits could reach 100 billion barrels.<sup>42, 43, 44</sup> In 2019, Somalia passed a new petroleum law and established the Somali Petroleum Agency to regulate and oversee the hydrocarbons sector. Puntland has an oil law that prevents Mogadishu from interfering in its oil sector.<sup>45, 46, 47</sup>

More than 90% of the total energy consumed in Somaliland comes from fast-diminishing vegetation. Charcoal is used mainly for cooking and is the primary source of non-biomass fuel. Lighting is provided by wicker lamps in most places, with kerosene being the most common fuel. Diesel-fueled power plants provide all the available electricity for lighting in large urban centers.<sup>48</sup>

A recent study by the African Development Bank found that Somalia has the highest resource potential of any African nation for onshore wind power. However, currently, there are no commercial wind farms in Somalia, and there are no plans for any to be built. In some instances, wind is used to generate power for water pumps and other devices.<sup>49, 50</sup>

Solar power could potentially generate 2,000 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>. Other options of renewable energy include geothermal and wave energy; coal and biofuels, such as bioethanol and biodiesel; and exploitation of biomass, such as sewage, landfill gas, and sludge digestion.<sup>51</sup>

An estimated 16% of the population has access to electricity, and the annual consumption of electricity per capita remains among the lowest in Africa. Customers have to pay a higher rate compared to Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>52</sup>

Oil exploration has the potential to rebuild Somalia's economy and create jobs, but it may create an armed confrontation between Somaliland and Somalia, and worsen the existing tensions with Kenya.<sup>53</sup>

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- 40 Afriways, "Somalia—Mining," 2006, <http://www.afriways.com/Countries/Somalia/Mining.html>
- 41 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, "Mining and Energy," n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/mining-and-energy/>
- 42 Afriways, "Somalia—Oil and Gas," 2010, <http://www.afriways.com/Countries/Somalia/OilandGas.html>
- 43 Tsvetana Paraskova, "Exxon, Shell May Return to Explore for Oil in Somalia," *Oil Price*, 28 June 2019, <https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Exxon-Shell-May-Return-To-Explore-For-Oil-In-Somalia.html>
- 44 Abdullahi Osman, "Somalia's Untapped Oil is Already Creating Problems," *7D News*, 2 March 2019, <https://7dnews.com/news/somalia-s-untapped-oil-is-already-creating-problems>
- 45 Elias Biryabarema, "Somalia Passes Petroleum Law, Paving Way for Exploration," *Reuters*, 20 May 2019, <https://www.cnb.com/2019/05/20/reuters-america-somalia-passes-petroleum-law-paving-way-for-exploration.html>
- 46 Harun Maruf, "Somalia Readies for oil Exploration, Still Working on Petroleum Law," *VOA*, 13 February 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/somalia-readies-oil-exploration-still-working-petroleum-law>
- 47 Abdullahi Osman, "Somalia's Untapped Oil Is Already Creating Problems," *7D News*, 2 March 2019, <https://7dnews.com/news/somalia-s-untapped-oil-is-already-creating-problems>
- 48 Victor Odundo Owuor, "Somalia—Wind Energy," *Shuraako*, 1 October 2012, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Wind%20Energy.pdf>
- 49 Victor Odundo Owuor, "Somalia—Wind Energy," *Shuraako*, 1 October 2012, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Wind%20Energy.pdf>
- 50 USAID, "Somalia—Energy Sector Review," 19 November 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/wherewework/somalia>
- 51 Victor Odundo Owuor, "Somalia—Wind Energy," *Shuraako*, 1 October 2012, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Wind%20Energy.pdf>
- 52 USAID, "Somalia—Energy Sector Review," 19 November 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/wherewework/somalia>
- 53 Abdullahi Osman, "Somalia's Untapped Oil Is Already Creating Problems," *7D News*, 2 March 2019, <https://7dnews.com/news/somalia-s-untapped-oil-is-already-creating-problems>

## Trade

Trade in Somalia is conducted by local merchants, and much of the population remains outside of the formal trade sector. The poor quality of the roads and port infrastructure, high levels of insecurity, a weak central government, and an absent customs authority limit foreign trade. Piracy on the high seas threatens the cargo transport industry.<sup>54, 55, 56</sup>

Sheep, goats, and cattle constitute 47.6% of Somalia's total exports. Other top export commodities include precious stones and scrap metals, fish and crustaceans, natural resins and gums, bananas, hides, and charcoal. In 2017, the top export destinations were Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Yemen, and Pakistan.<sup>57, 58</sup> In 2018, Somalia exported mainly to Bulgaria, China, Japan, India, and France.<sup>59, 60</sup>

Somalia's principal imports are sugar, sorghum, corn, rice, wheat flour, palm oil, construction materials, khat (an herbal stimulant, also called gat or qat), petroleum products, and manufactured goods.<sup>61, 62</sup> The top import origins are China, India, Ethiopia, Oman, Kenya, Turkey, and Malaysia.<sup>63</sup>

The United States has little trade with Somalia. U.S. exports to Somalia include legumes, grain, vegetable oils, dairy products, baking-related goods, and electrical machinery. The United States imports cosmetics, vegetable saps and extracts, and electrical machinery from Somalia. The United States has no trade agreements with Somalia.<sup>64</sup> As of 2017, Somalia had a negative trade balance of USD 2.04 billion. The last time Somalia had a positive trade balance was 1995.<sup>65</sup>

## Tourism

The governments of most developed nations advise their citizens to avoid all travel to Somalia. The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens not to travel to Somalia, including Puntland and Somaliland, due to violent crime, terrorism, kidnapping, and piracy.<sup>66, 67</sup>

Until recently, the only foreigners who came to Somalia were diplomats, aid workers, peacekeepers, and UN employees. Today, the nearly nonexistent tourism sector is taking its first steps trying to attract foreign visitors

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- 54 Societe Generale, "Somalia: Country Risk," 2018, <https://import-export.societegenerale.fr/en/country/somalia/trade-country-risk>
- 55 EU NAVFOR Somalia, "Piracy Attack off the Coast of Somalia," 23 April 2019, <https://eunavfor.eu/piracy-attack-off-the-coast-of-somalia/>
- 56 Kieron Monks, "Piracy Threat Returns to African Waters," CNN, 3 January 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/05/25/africa/piracy-resurgence-somalia/index.html>
- 57 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," *The World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- 58 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, "Industrial and Manufacturing," n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/industrial/>
- 59 Societe Generale, "Somalia: Country Risk," 2018, <https://import-export.societegenerale.fr/en/country/somalia/trade-country-risk>
- 60 OEC, "Somalia," 2018, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/som/>
- 61 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, "Industrial and Manufacturing," n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/industrial/>
- 62 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- 63 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia—Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- 64 Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Somalia," 2018, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/east-africa/somalia>
- 65 OEC, "Somalia—Trade Balance," 2017, [https://oec.world/en/profile/country/som/#Trade\\_Balance](https://oec.world/en/profile/country/som/#Trade_Balance)
- 66 U.S. Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, "Somalia Travel Advisory," 9 April 2019, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/somalia-travel-advisory.html>
- 67 EuroMonitor International, "Travel and Tourism in Somalia—Country Report," October 2014, <https://www.euromonitor.com/travel-and-tourism-in-somalia/report>

into the country. More than 150 travel agencies operate nationwide, but hotels are few, and land travel is very dangerous. In 2017, Somalia was admitted to the United Nations World Tourism Organization raising hopes that one day the country again will be called “The Pearl of the Indian Ocean.”<sup>68, 69</sup>

Hotels in large cities are protected by private security militias and are sometimes targeted by terrorists. No major terrorist attack has occurred in Somaliland since 2008.<sup>70, 71</sup>

## Banking and Finance

The Somali shilling (SOS) is the official currency of Somalia, but the USD is accepted for medium and large transactions. After the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government in 2012, the Central Bank of Somalia (CBS) was revived, and the SOS was reintroduced.<sup>72</sup> The CBS regulates the circulation of the SOS, but the bank is not fully functioning. There are no set banking protocols or traditional investment banks in the country. Presently, the Somali banking system does not lend itself to conventional finance. Furthermore, only about 15% of the population has a bank account.<sup>73, 74, 75</sup> Somaliland uses the Somaliland shilling (also called SOS) as its currency. However, the currency is not recognized by the international community and is not used in international trade.<sup>76</sup>

The primary way to move funds around in South Central Somalia, Somaliland, or Puntland is through mobile money services. Some reliable estimates indicate that at least 70% of Somalis have access to mobile services, and many use their cell phones for making financial arrangements, including cash transfers from cities to rural areas. Mobile money transfers outperform the use of cash and are available in USD. After registering with a mobile service provider, customers do not need to have a bank account—they can use their phones to move money quickly and securely across distances, directly to another mobile user, regardless of their provider. The use of mobile money services suits the lifestyle of the nomadic population and facilitates trade.<sup>77, 78</sup>

Hawala is an alternative remittance system first developed in Southeast Asia, before the introduction of Western banking services. The word hawala comes from Arabic and roughly translates to “change” or “transform.” Hawala is based on trust and makes extensive use of regional affiliations and family relationships. Transfer of money takes place among members of a network of hawala dealers. Hawala operates without checks or wire transfers and may seem cumbersome and risky. However, the system is cost effective, efficient, bureaucracy-free, and reliable. The informal hawala system has a total of 17 participating organizations. The largest in Somalia are Dababshill, Amal Express, North American Money Transfers (Mustaqbal), and Kaah Express.<sup>79</sup>

68 United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, “After Years of Conflict, Somalia Eager to Recapture Former Glory as Tourism Destination,” 7 January 2018, <https://unsom.unmissions.org/after-years-conflict-somalia-eager-recapture-former-glory-tourism-destination>

69 Kathryn Walsh, “What Would You Need to Visit Somalia?” USA Today, 27 April 2018, <https://traveltips.usatoday.com/would-need-visit-somalia-104177.html>

70 Somali Development and Reconstruction Bank, “Tourism,” n.d., <https://www.sodevbank.so/travel-and-tourism/>

71 Gov.UK, “Foreign Travel Advice—Somalia,” July 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/somalia/terrorism>

72 Conor Gaffey, “Why Somalia Wants to Print Its Own Banknotes Again after 26 Years,” *Newsweek*, 9 March 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/somali-shilling-somali-currency-565682>

73 World Atlas, “What is the Currency of Somalia?” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-currency-of-somalia.html>

74 Victor Odundo Owuor, “Mobile Money Transfers Have Taken off in Somalia, but It’s a Risky Business,” Conversation, 17 October 2018, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-17/mobile-money-transfers-have-taken-somalia-its-risky-business>

75 World Bank, “Central Bank of Somalia and Somali Financial Institutions Take Crucial Steps to Modernize Banking Sector,” 18 January 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/01/18/central-bank-of-somalia-and-somali-financial-institutions-take-crucial-steps-to-modernize-banking-sector>

76 World Atlas, “What is the Currency of Somalia?” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-currency-of-somalia.html>

77 Victor Owuor, “Somalia Banking: Transfers, Challenges and Opportunities,” Shuraako, January 2013, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Somalia%20Banking%20Transfers%2C%20Challenges%20And%20Opportunities.pdf>

78 Victor Odundo Owuor, “Mobile Money Transfers Have Taken off in Somalia, but It’s a Risky Business,” Conversation, 17 October 2018, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-17/mobile-money-transfers-have-taken-somalia-its-risky-business>

79 Victor Owuor, “Somalia Banking: Transfers, Challenges and Opportunities,” Shuraako, January 2013, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Somalia%20Banking%20Transfers%2C%20Challenges%20And%20Opportunities.pdf>

A third way of transferring money, physical movement of cash across the border, occurs mainly in the south. A common transportation method is through small airplanes that utilize smaller airports for the movement. However, this method is less frequent and faces international pressure for its potential money laundering implications.<sup>80</sup>

## Standard of Living

Somalia is not included in the Human Development Index because data is unavailable due to ongoing violence and political instability.<sup>81</sup>

Famine, violence, severe droughts, poverty, and disease are familiar parts of life in this divided nation of nomad herders and farmers. Until recently, Somalia did not have a government, and as a result, most of the population, especially women and children, suffers from a lack of the most basic services needed for their survival. In a country where cholera is endemic, and only 16% of the at-risk population is vaccinated against the disease, total expenditure on health per capita is expected to rise from USD 42 to USD 89 in 2040.<sup>82, 83, 84</sup>

Life expectancy at birth is somewhere between 54 and 56; diarrheal diseases, flu, and pneumonia are the leading causes of death.<sup>85</sup> The maternal mortality is 732 per 100,000 live births, and the fertility rate is about 6.3 births per woman. The infant mortality rate is high, with 80 deaths per 1,000 live births—much higher than the global average of 30 deaths per 1,000 live births. The under-five mortality rate, although much lower than ten years ago, is still very high, with 127 deaths per 1,000 live births; the global average is 39 deaths per 1,000 live births. Only 42% of children are vaccinated against major childhood diseases, and new cases of HIV/AIDS infections among children and pregnant women are still being reported. In 2017, Somalia experienced a measles outbreak of around 14,000 suspected cases, putting millions of weak and hungry children at risk of this life-threatening disease. About 25% of children suffer from moderate to severe stunting as a result of malnutrition.<sup>86, 87</sup>

Early childhood education is nonexistent in Somalia, and only 21% of children attend primary school. Access to education in rural areas is more limited than in urban areas, and only about 40% of school children are girls. Data about literacy and attendance rates in secondary schools are unavailable — nearly 50% of children under 17 work.<sup>88, 89</sup> Hospitals are in short supply. In Somaliland, for example, one hospital in Burao serves 2.5 million people.<sup>90</sup>

Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Currently, food insecurity affects more than 2 million people. In the first half of 2017, about 6.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance. The poverty rate ranges in

80 Victor Owuor, “Somalia Banking: Transfers, Challenges and Opportunities,” Shuraako, January 2013, <https://shuraako.org/sites/default/files/Somalia%20Banking%20Transfers%2C%20Challenges%20And%20Opportunities.pdf>

81 UNDP, “Latest Human Development Index (HDI) Ranking,” 2018, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>

82 World Health Organization, “Somalia,” 2018, <https://www.who.int/csr/don/29-march-2018-cholera-somalia/en/>

83 UNESCO, “Somalia—Socio-economic Indicators,” 2017, <http://uis.unesco.org/country/SO>

84 Chelsey Crowne, “Top 10 Facts about Life Expectancy in Somalia,” Borgen Project, 30 March 2019, <https://borgenproject.org/top-10-facts-about-life-expectancy-in-somalia/>

85 World Life Expectancy, “Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/somalia-life-expectancy>

86 UNICEF, “Somalia,” 2017, <https://data.unicef.org/country/som/#>

87 World Health Organization, “WHO and Partners Scale Up Response in Somalia to Protect Children from Deadly Measles Outbreak,” 25 July 2017, <http://www.emro.who.int/som/somalia-news/who-and-partners-scale-up-response-in-somalia-to-protect-children-from-deadly-measles-outbreak.html>

88 UNICEF, “Somalia,” 2017, <https://data.unicef.org/country/som/#>

89 Matthew Cline, “10 Important Facts about Girls’ Education in Somalia,” Borgen Project, 13 July 2018, <https://borgenproject.org/tag/literacy-in-somalia/>

90 Adrian Blomfield, “Hunger, Disease and Violence: Is Somalia the Worst Place in the World to Be a Child?” Telegraph, 2 October 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/hunger-disease-violence-somalia-worst-place-world-child/>

different areas, from 26% to 70%. Somaliland and Puntland are more stable, and socioeconomic conditions are somewhat better there than in the rest of Somalia.<sup>91, 92</sup>

## Employment

Unemployment is rampant in Somalia, especially for young people ages 14–29, among whom the rate is 67%. The unemployment rate among women is 74%, compared to 61% for men. Low employment has many causes, such as a lack of viable education, cultural prejudices that dictate women must adhere to entrenched traditional gender roles, a small formal sector unable to accommodate the growing population, and a lack of foreign investment. One in five Somali households depends on remittances.<sup>93, 94, 95</sup>

## Outlook

Since the ouster of Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia has experienced conflict and chaos, exacerbated by famine and al-Shabaab terror attacks. Since 2015, the economy has begun to recover slowly, supported by donations, private investment, increased agricultural production, and the revival of the construction, telecommunication, and financial services sectors. In 2018, the account deficit dropped to 5.6% of GDP, and the economy expanded by 2.8%, with the GDP reaching an all-time high of USD 7.48 billion. In 2019, after Somalia began implementing an economic program monitored by the International Monetary Fund, growth was expected to reach 3.1%. Inflation was expected to decrease from 3.5% in 2018 to 3% in 2019.<sup>96, 97, 98</sup>

Economic recovery remains vulnerable to terrorism, the recurrence of droughts, and the limited capacity of the emerging institutions. Rampant poverty—over half of the population lives in extreme poverty—and unemployment needs to be addressed to stabilize the economy further.<sup>99, 100</sup> The inadequate job market and limited educational opportunities may hamper the prospect for poverty reduction, and the decline in groundwater increases the likelihood of more violence.<sup>101, 102</sup> For the foreseeable future, Somalia will continue to depend on humanitarian aid and foreign military assistance.<sup>103</sup>

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- 91 Aishwarya Bansal, “Poverty in Somalia,” Borgen Report, 5 May 2017, <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-somalia/>
- 92 World Bank, “World Bank Launched Somali Poverty Profile: First Comprehensive Snapshot of Welfare Conditions,” 5 October 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/05/world-bank-launched-somali-poverty-profile-first-comprehensive-snapshot-of-welfare-conditions>
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- 94 Fortune of Africa, “Unemployment in Somalia,” 2015, <https://fortuneofafrica.com/somalia/unemployment-in-somalia/>
- 95 Aishwarya Bansal, “Poverty in Somalia,” Borgen Project, 5 May 2017, <https://borgenproject.org/poverty-in-somalia/>
- 96 World Bank, “Somalia,” 19 April 2018, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/752311492188170790/mpo-som.pdf>
- 97 International Monetary Fund, “IMF Management Complete the First Review under the Staff-Monitored Program for Somalia,” Press Release 19/60, 26 February 2019, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/02/26/pr1960-somalia-imf-management-complete-the-first-review-under-the-staff-monitored-program>
- 98 African Development Bank Group, “Somalia Economic Outlook,” 2019, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/somalia/somalia-economic-outlook>
- 99 World Bank, “Somalia,” 19 April 2018, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/752311492188170790/mpo-som.pdf>
- 100 International Monetary Fund, “IMF Management Complete the First Review under the Staff-Monitored Program for Somalia,” Press Release 19/60, 26 February 2019, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/02/26/pr1960-somalia-imf-management-complete-the-first-review-under-the-staff-monitored-program>
- 101 World Bank, “Somalia,” 19 April 2018, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/752311492188170790/mpo-som.pdf>
- 102 World Bank, “Somalia,” 2019, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/somalia>
- 103 *Economist*, “Somalia—in Brief,” 2019, <https://country.eiu.com/somalia>

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 3 | Economy, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Somalia is one of the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world.  True  False
2. Since the discovery of oil on the coast of Somalia, hydrocarbon production has become the driving force behind economic growth.  True  False
3. Somalia's telecommunications industry is one of the best in Africa.  True  False
4. The annual consumption of electricity per capita in Somalia is among the lowest in Africa.  True  False
5. *Hawala* is a shrub that grows in the wild in Somalia. Its flowers are in high demand in the West and are present in many cosmetic products.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 3 | Economy, Assessment Answers

1. True:  
Life expectancy at birth is somewhere between 54 and 56 in Somalia. The poverty rate ranges in different areas, from 26% to 70%. Millions of people suffer from food insecurity and need humanitarian assistance to survive. Unemployment is rampant; the unemployment rate among women is 74%, compared to 61% for men.
2. False:  
Agriculture is the backbone of Somalia's economy. Livestock and crops are the main sources of economic activity. Livestock contribute about 40% to GDP.
3. True:  
Telecommunication firms provide wireless services in most major cities and offer the lowest international call rates on the continent.
4. True:  
Only 16% of the population has access to electricity. More than 90% of the total energy consumed in Somaliland comes from fast-diminishing vegetation. Charcoal is used mainly for cooking. Lighting is provided by wicker lamps in most places, with kerosene being the most common fuel.
5. False:  
*Hawala* is an alternative remittance system first developed in Southeast Asia, before the introduction of Western banking services. *Hawala* operates without checks or wire transfers, and may seem cumbersome and risky. However, the system is cost effective, efficient, bureaucracy-free, and reliable.

## Chapter 4 | Society



A Somali boy holding a shirt aloft to dry in the wind at Lido Beach in the Abdul-Aziz district of the Somali capital Mogadishu  
Flickr / AMISOM Public Information

### Introduction

Somali people share a language, religion, many cultural traditions, and a mythical founding ancestor, but they are divided into competing clans, and many people are ostracized for lack of clan membership. About 90% of the population—which was estimated at 12.3 million in 2014—belongs to 1 of 6 major Somali clans; the remaining 10% are unaffiliated urban dwellers and other marginal groups.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Clan membership traditionally determines occupation (herder, farmer, or artisan), dialect, religious sect, marriage partners, and social obligations—including potential warfare against other clans. The hierarchy of status places herders and farmers over lower status artisans, who, in turn, stand above ethnic foreigners and descendants of slaves.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, “Somalia,” in *The World Factbook*, 26 June 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- 2 National African Language Resource Center, “Somali Language and Culture,” University of Indiana, n.d., <https://nalrc.indiana.edu/doc/brochures/somali.pdf>
- 3 United National Population Fund and the Federal Republic of Somalia, “Population Estimation Survey 2014,” October 2014, <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf>
- 4 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 51, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)



The first thing Somalis want to know about other Somalis is to which clan they belong. The clan is the most important social group that determines a person's identity and welfare.<sup>5</sup> The clan system is called by some Somalis “four point five,” which reflects the country's political structure; four main clans that control much of the country and the parliament seats, and the various small clans valued at half a point each and amount to “point five.”<sup>6</sup>

## Ethnic Groups and Clans

Somalis are one of the Eastern Cushitic peoples of the Horn of Africa, related to the Oromo in Ethiopia, Afar in Djibouti, Beja in Sudan, and the Reendille and Boni in Kenya.<sup>7</sup> Somalis are linguistically, culturally, and religiously homogenous people who trace their origin to a shared founding father, Samaale (or Sammale).<sup>8, 9</sup>

The emphasis on lineage and clan is the organizing principle of social life and politics in Somalia. It is also responsible for differences in dialects, traditions, and interpretations of Islam. Somalis can trace their heritage back over many generations.<sup>10, 11</sup>

Somalis divide themselves into two groups: herders and farmers. The nomadic herding Samaale dominate in the north but are also found throughout the country. The major nomadic clans of the Samaale are Hawiye, Daarood, Isaaq, and Dir.<sup>12, 13</sup>

### Hawiye

Probably the largest clan in Somalia, the Hawiye clan populates southern and central Somalia and dominates the capital Mogadishu, which is divided along clan lines. The clan's subgroups are the Degodia, Ceyr, Murosade, Ajuran, Hawadle, Habargidir, and Abgal. Hawiye occupy important administrative positions and the top ranks of the army, and the clan is a major player in the fight for political power in the country.<sup>14, 15, 16</sup>

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- 5 Talk of the Nation, “'Infidel' and an Argument for Intolerance,” NPR, 5 February 2007, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7181401>
  - 6 Jelter Meers. “Trekking Through Hell to Flee from al-Shabab,” Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 1 October 2018, <https://www.occrp.org/en/37-ccb/ccb/8654-trekking-through-hell-to-flee-from-al-shabab>
  - 7 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
  - 8 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: People: Ethnic Groups,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia>
  - 9 Toby Lewis et al., “Somali Cultural Profile,” Ethnomed, n.d., <https://ethnomed.org/culture/somali/somali-cultural-profile>
  - 10 Marian Aguiar, “Somalia,” *Encyclopedia of Africa*, vol. 1, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 396.
  - 11 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
  - 12 Marian Aguiar, “Somalia,” *Encyclopedia of Africa*, vol. 1, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 396.
  - 13 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
  - 14 World Atlas, “Ethnic Groups and Clans in Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-and-clans-in-somalia.html>
  - 15 Minority Rights Group International, “World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Somalia,” May 2011, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce42c.html>
  - 16 Gitau Muthuma, “Clans and Crisis in Somalia,” *Guardian*, 6 May 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/06/clansandcrisisinsomalia>

## Daarood (Darod)

The Daarood, who formed the autonomous region of Puntland, are the largest clan of ethnic Somalis outside of Somalia. The clan traces its lineage to Abdirahman bin Isma'il al- Jabarti, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. They inhabit the northern region of Somalia with a presence in Gedo and Kismayo. The subgroups of this clan are the Harti, Ogaden, and Marehan, who count President Siad Barre among their members. The Hawiye and Daarood clans make up roughly three-fourths of the population. The struggle for power and control of resources between these two large clans hinders the political unification of the country.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup>

## Isaaq

The Isaaq clan has declared their territory in northwestern Somalia to be independent Somaliland. The Isaaq clan traces its ancestry to a sheik who came to Somalia from Arabia around the 13th century.<sup>20, 21</sup>

## Dir

The Dir clan predominantly inhabits the northern part of Somalia and has spread into the three neighboring countries. The subgroups of this clan are the Akisho, Gurgure, Surre, Issa, Barsuug, and the Biimaal subgroup who reside in the southern part of the country.<sup>22</sup>

## Digil, Rahanweyn, and Mirifle

The Digil and Rahanweyn clans are concentrated in coastal and farming communities in the two river regions of the south and along the coast.<sup>23</sup> These groups account for approximately one-fifth of the population.<sup>24</sup> The Digil and Rahanweyn are sometimes referred to as *Sab*, but some sources report that *sab* implies dishonor and that Rahanweyn and Digil clan members consider this word a derogatory term. The Mirifle Rahanweyn live in the fertile parts of Somalia; in addition to raising crops, they also practice pastoralism.<sup>25, 26</sup>

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- 17 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Somalia," May 2011, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce42c.html>
- 18 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 48 (fn. 9).
- 19 Gitau Muthuma, "Clans and Crisis in Somalia," *Guardian*, 6 May 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/06/clansandcrisisinsomalia>
- 20 World Atlas, "Ethnic Groups and Clans in Somalia," n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-and-clans-in-somalia.html>
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- 24 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 25 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 48 (fn. 9).
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## Minority Groups

### *Gaboye/Midgan*

The Gaboye, which include subgroups Tumal, Yibir (Yibro), and Galagala, are ethnic Somalis associated with the Sammal, but cultural stigma and tradition exclude them from membership in the Sammal clan because of their lower status occupations as shoemakers, blacksmiths, barbers, herbalists, and hunter-gatherers. These groups live in central and northern Somalia. Some members of the Gaboye, Tumal, and Yibir groups have assimilated into the Isaaq in Somaliland or the Darod in Puntland.<sup>27, 28, 29</sup>

### *Bantu/Jarir*

Most of the Bantu are small-scale farmers who live in the south along the Jubba and Shabelle rivers. Their defining feature is their common language, also known as Bantu, although many also speak some Arabic and Swahili. Subgroups of the Bantu include the Gosha, Shabelle, Shidle, and Boni.<sup>30, 31, 32</sup> Although they share a language and culture, their origins in the area vary. Some are believed to be the remnants of indigenous people who lived in the area before the arrival of the Somali pastoralists. Others were brought into Somalia from Central Africa by Arab slave traders.

### *Benaadiris*

One of the large minority groups that does not constitute a clan is the Reer Hamar or Benaadiris. Benaadiris are mostly of Arabic descent and inhabit the geographic region of Benaadir, which includes the southern coast of Somalia. However, they are not a homogenous ethnic group; their identity rests on their place of residence, and they do not have a common ancestor.<sup>33</sup>

### *Baravnese*

Like the Benaadiris, the Baravnese are believed to be descendants of Arab immigrant settlers from Yemen who settled in southern Somalia about ten centuries ago. Most Baravnese live in coastal towns and work as traders.<sup>34, 35</sup> Non-indigenous peoples of Somalia include Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, Britons, and Italians.<sup>36, 37</sup>

27 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "A Study on Minorities in Somalia (Report)," 1 August 2002, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/study-minorities-somalia>

28 Susan M. Hassig, Zawah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 51, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbp\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbp_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

29 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Somalia," May 2011, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce42c.html>

30 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "A Study on Minorities in Somalia," 1 August 2002, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/study-minorities-somalia>

31 Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples—Somalia," May 2011, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce42c.html>

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33 Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Somalia: The Reer Hamar and/or Benadiri, Including the Location of Their Traditional Homeland, Affiliated Clans and Risks They Face from Other Clans," 3 December 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/51e4facb4.html>

34 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "A Study on Minorities in Somalia," 1 August 2002, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/study-minorities-somalia>

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36 Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, eds., *Encyclopedia of Africa*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press: 2010), 402.

37 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia," in *The World Factbook*, 26 June 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

# Languages

## Somali

Somali is spoken by more than 20 million people around the world and has long contributed to a shared identity among the people of the Horn of Africa.<sup>38, 39</sup> It is part of the Eastern Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic family, which was previously called Hamito-Semitic.<sup>40</sup> The Afro-Asiatic family includes Afar—spoken in Djibouti, Oromo—spoken in Ethiopia, and Arabic. The Somali language has many dialects that are associated with the clan families that occupy specific regions. These fall into three general groupings: the northern (common or standard) dialect spoken by most Somalis, is used in local and international broadcasting and written communication<sup>41</sup>, coastal or Banaadir Somali, and central Somali, which includes the Digil/Rahanwey dialect spoken primarily in the vicinity of the Shabelle and Jubba rivers.<sup>42, 43</sup>

The Somali language had no written alphabet until 1972.<sup>44</sup> When Somalia gained independence, experts determined that since Arabic did not depict vowels, it was not suitable for writing Somali, and since the indigenous script, Osmanya, was too closely associated with the Majeerteen-Daarood clan, a more neutral writing system was needed. The new writing system that was eventually chosen, despite colonial associations, was a modified form of the Latin alphabet. The new writing system, invented by Shire Jama Ahmed, became the official script for written Somali, and Somali became the sole official language of Somalia in 1972.<sup>45, 46, 47, 48</sup>

## Other Languages: Arabic, Swahili, English, and Italian

Arabic, the language of the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran, serves as a unifying element of Somali identity. Somali has adapted many Arabic words, from old words related to religion and international trade to modern phrases related to finance and government.<sup>49, 50</sup> Many Somalis memorize the entire Quran.<sup>51</sup> Somali also contains old Qahtani words, common to Cushitic and Semitic languages.<sup>52</sup>

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- 38 National African Language Resource Center, “Somali Language and Culture,” University of Indiana, n.d., <https://nalrc.indiana.edu/doc/brochures/somali.pdf>
- 39 David Appleyard and Martin Orwin, “Chapter 15: The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia,” in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 283.
- 40 Culture Trip, “An Introduction to the Somali People,” n.d., <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/articles/an-introduction-to-the-somali-people/>
- 41 David Appleyard and Martin Orwin, “Chapter 15: The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia,” in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 285.
- 42 David Appleyard and Martin Orwin, “Chapter 15: The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia,” in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 284–85.
- 43 NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, “Somalia Language and Culture,” New York University, 2012, [https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language\\_n\\_Cultural\\_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf](https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf)
- 44 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, “Somalia: People: Ethnic Groups,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia>
- 45 David Appleyard and Martin Orwin, “Chapter 15: The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia,” in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 286–88.
- 46 A. Abu Boahen, ed., *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1985), 600–601.
- 47 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 73.
- 48 NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, “Somalia Language and Culture,” New York University, 2012, [https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language\\_n\\_Cultural\\_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf](https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf)
- 49 Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, “Somalia: Where Clan Families Rule,” 30 November 2001, 5, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140402151900/http://www.pcgn.org.uk/Somalia-Where%20Clan%20Families%20Rule-2001.pdf>
- 50 NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, “Somalia Language and Culture,” New York University, 2012, [https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language\\_n\\_Cultural\\_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf](https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf)
- 51 Bernhard Helander, “Chapter 1: Somalia,” in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 49–50.
- 52 NYS Statewide Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, “Somalia Language and Culture,” New York University, 2012, [https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language\\_n\\_Cultural\\_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf](https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/SomaliaLanguageCultureUpdate.pdf)

In the past, the 10% of Somalis who learned English or Italian gained access to the privileges of a colonial administrative class. Italian remained a language of instruction in higher education through the 1970s. Arabic and English continue to be languages of instruction at all educational levels. Bantu peoples living along the southern coast speak varieties of Swahili.<sup>53, 54, 55</sup>

## Religion

Somalia is a religiously homogeneous society; more than 99% of the population is Sunni Muslim. The Bantu people who inhabit the southern and central regions near the rivers are Muslims but also continue to practice traditional animist beliefs.<sup>56</sup> The conversion of Somalis to Islam took place between the 11th and 13th centuries.<sup>57</sup> Today, Somali Muslims belong predominantly to the Shafi'i sect of Sunni Islam. The Shafi'i school of thought was established in the 8th and 9th centuries by Muhammad ibn Idris ash Shafi'i, who lived on the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>58, 59, 60, 61</sup> All other religious groups combined constitute less than 1% of the population and includes about 1,000 Christians, 1,000 Sufi Muslims, and an unknown number of Shia Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews.<sup>62</sup>

The provisional constitution and the constitutions of Somaliland and Puntland make Islam the state religion. These laws strictly forbid proselytizing by other religions, prohibit Muslims from converting, criminalize blasphemy, and stipulate that all laws must comply with Sharia.<sup>63</sup> Islamic instruction is mandatory in all schools, except in those operated by non-Muslims. Non-Muslim students who attend public schools may request an exemption from Islamic instruction. In al-Shabaab-controlled areas, schools teach a militant form of jihad, emphasizing war on those deemed infidels. The religious affairs ministry has created a plan to promote tolerance and counter al-Shabaab ideology, but little has been done so far.<sup>64</sup>

Mosques are located in major cities and rural villages. Nomadic Somalis rely on traveling teachers called *waddo* (literate men) to lead prayers, perform ritual sacrifices at weddings, bless livestock, and resolve disputes.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup>

- 53 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 54 David Appleyard and Martin Orwin, "Chapter 15: The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia," in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 285.
- 55 Lee Cassanelli and Farah Sheikh Abdikadir, "Somalia: Education in Transition," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 7 (2007): 106–7, <http://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1066&context=bildhaan>
- 56 U.S. Department of State, "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Somalia, 21 June 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/somalia/>
- 57 Jörg H.A. Janzen and Ioan M. Lewis, "Somalia," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Somalia>
- 58 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 55.
- 59 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 60 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 39.
- 61 Rafiq A. Tschannen, "What are the Differences Between Hanafi, Shafi, Hanbali and Maliki in Islam?" Muslim Times, 4 October 2017, <https://themuslimtimes.info/2017/10/04/what-are-the-differences-between-hanafi-shafi-hanbali-and-maliki-in-islam/>
- 62 U.S. Department of State, "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Somalia, 21 June 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/somalia/>
- 63 U.S. Department of State, "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Somalia, 21 June 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/somalia/>
- 64 U.S. Department of State, "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" Somalia, 21 June 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/somalia/>
- 65 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 48.
- 66 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 67 FAO, "Somalia: Traditional authorities and customary institutions," n.d., [http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/customary-law/traditional-authorities-and-customary-institutions/en/?country\\_iso3=SOM](http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/customary-law/traditional-authorities-and-customary-institutions/en/?country_iso3=SOM)

Sufism, an Islamic mystical philosophy based on elevating the soul by following the correct path (*tariqa* in Arabic; *dariqa* in Somali), spread through the Somali population in the 15th century.<sup>68, 69, 70</sup> Religious brotherhoods of Sufi dervishes, known as tariqas, built religious communities called jamaats throughout central and southern Somalia.<sup>71</sup> Membership in a tariqa was determined by clan. Somalis believe that the leaders of these brotherhoods have baraka, a power to grant divine blessings or bring harm to others.<sup>72</sup>

Indigenous Somali beliefs influence contemporary religious practices. *Waaq*, the pre-Islamic, Cushitic sky god, is now a synonym for Allah. Spiritual power resides not only in the *baraka* of leaders and saints but also in the blessings (*duco*) and curses (*inkaar*) of elders.<sup>73, 74</sup> Spirit possession occurs in all social classes and among diverse ethnic groups and is most closely associated with women.<sup>75, 76, 77</sup> The daily household ritual of lighting incense at dawn and dusk intends to send prayers to Allah and ward off jinns and other spirits.<sup>78</sup>

## Cuisine

Somali cuisine varies regionally and displays Arab, Turkish, East African, Indian, and Italian influences. Islamic dietary restrictions and the two predominant ways of life—herding and farming—shape eating habits throughout the country. The nomadic diet is high in protein and includes camel or goat milk, *ghee* (clarified butter), meat, and wild berries and fruits. Farmers produce grains, legumes, vegetables, and cash crops such as coffee, bananas, and citrus fruit. For many Somali women, the daily preparation of staple cereals into bread or porridge is a lengthy, labor-intensive process that begins with grinding corn or wheat.<sup>79, 80, 81</sup> Muufo is a traditional flatbread made from ground corn flour and baked in a clay oven or fried in a pan.<sup>82</sup>

For Muslims, alcohol and pork are *haram*, or forbidden foods and drinks. Lamb, goat, camel, cow, and chicken are *halal*, fit for use when slaughtered according to prescribed ritual methods.<sup>83, 84</sup> Fishing is looked down upon

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- 68 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 69 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 61.
- 70 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 44.
- 71 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 61.
- 72 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 73 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/>
- 74 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 41, 44.
- 75 Marja Tiilikainen, "Somali Saar in the Era of Social and Religious Change," in *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Bettina E. Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 117–33.
- 76 Linda L. Giles, "Spirit Possession: Sub-Saharan Africa: East Africa," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality, and Health*, eds. Suad Joseph and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 433–35.
- 77 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 52–53.
- 78 Bernhard Helander, "Chapter 1: Somalia," in *Islam outside the Arab World*, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 49.
- 79 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 114, 120, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- 80 Barlin Ali, *Somali Cuisine* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), ix.
- 81 Countries and Their Cultures, "Somalia: Food and Economy," n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html>
- 82 My Somali Food, "Muufo," n.d., <https://www.mysomalifood.com/muufo/>
- 83 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 111.
- 84 Aliya S. Haq et al., "Report on Somali Diet," *Ethnomed*, 1 August 2003, <https://ethnomed.org/clinical/nutrition/somali-diet-report>

by traditional nomads. Fish consumption is most common in coastal towns.<sup>85, 86</sup> Cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, ginger, black pepper, chilies, and cumin are among the many different spices used in Somali food and reflect the country's history. Frying is the most common method of cooking. The Italian influence is evident in the popular dish *baasto* (pasta) and marinara sauce, as well as in vegetable soups (*manistroni*) made without meat.<sup>87, 88, 89</sup>

*Xalwo* (Somali halwa) is a popular dessert made from ghee or oil, nutmeg, cardamom, saffron, and cornstarch. It used to be eaten only during weddings and Muslim celebrations, but now it is consumed during afternoon tea. This dessert originated in Oman.<sup>90</sup>

Milk from camels, goats, or cows is a major food source for herders and nomadic families. Camel herders may drink up to ten quarts of milk a day during the rainy season.<sup>91</sup> Tea, the national drink, is served plain and strong or sweet and milky, infused with fruit and spices. Home-roasted coffee may be prepared with ghee.<sup>92</sup> Somalis believe that hot, sugary tea quenches thirst better than cool water. It is common to drink 4–6 cups of sweet tea in a day.<sup>93, 94</sup>

## Traditional Dress

Somali dress reflects the cultural influence of the many groups that have invaded the region. Today, traditional dress is influenced by the 19th century substitution of *merikani* (cotton cloth imported from the United States) for the leather clothing worn in earlier times.<sup>95</sup>

The traditional dress for men is a colorful sarong-like garment called *macaawii*, which is wrapped around the lower half of the body and worn with a Western shirt. Another garment worn by men is the *thawb*, a long white robe. Some men wear a *benadirya kufia*, a snug-fitting cap, or a *taqiyah*, a rounded skullcap worn under the *keffiyeh* headscarf.<sup>96, 97, 98</sup>

Women wear brightly colored, full-length dresses such as the *guntiino*—similar to an Indian sari—wrapped around the body and tied over one shoulder. On special occasions, women wear the *dirac*, a long, brightly colored dress with various patterns. Married women wear head scarves and shawls, but rarely veil themselves.<sup>99, 100, 101</sup> Jewelry

85 Susan M. Hassig, *Somalia* (Cultures of the World Series) (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000), 41–43.

86 Barlin Ali, *Somali Cuisine* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), ix.

87 Barlin Ali, *Somali Cuisine* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), ix–x.

88 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 112.

89 Susan M. Hassig, *Somalia* (Cultures of the World Series) (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000), 120.

90 Somali Food Blog, “Somali Halwa (Xalwo) Halwa Somali,” 2 January 2012, <http://xawaash.com/?p=2022#sthash.HXGiYred.dpbs>

91 Countries and Their Cultures, “Somalia: Food and Economy,” n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html>

92 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 114–16.

93 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 118, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

94 Aliya S. Haq et al., “Report on Somali Diet,” Ethnomed, 1 August 2003, <https://ethnomed.org/clinical/nutrition/somali-diet-report>

95 Heather Marie Akou, *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 27–28.

96 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 117–18.

97 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 53, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

98 World Atlas “The Culture of Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-culture-of-somalia.html>

99 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 117–18.

100 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 53, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

101 World Atlas, “The Culture of Somalia,” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-culture-of-somalia.html>

made of silver, considered a pure metal blessed by the Prophet Muhammad, is a sign of wealth. Ornamental beads made of wood, stone, or glass are worn by both men and women on special occasions.<sup>102, 103</sup>

## Gender Issues

Despite provisions in the federal constitution that prohibit discrimination, women do not have the same rights as men. Women experience systematic subordination to men and discrimination in education, politics, housing, the inheritance of property, and credit. In al-Shabaab-controlled areas, women's participation in economic activities is perceived as anti-Islamic.<sup>104</sup> There are no laws that limit the participation of women in the political process, but cultural norms keep women out. Women are traditionally excluded from Somaliland's upper legislative body, the House of Elders. However, a couple of women did serve in the House of Representatives in Puntland, and the minister of women and family affairs was a woman.<sup>105, 106</sup>

Somali women have a certain amount of power as wives and mothers in the private realm of the home. But war and famine have forced many women outside of their traditional sphere. Now, many women are the primary breadwinners for their households; some have become entrepreneurs.<sup>107, 108, 109</sup> Despite this, Somali culture and Islamic laws disproportionately favor men. This allows men to practice polygamy and frequently divorce, which often compels a woman to return to her father's family or her paternal male cousins for help.<sup>110, 111, 112</sup> Domestic violence and sexual harassment are also prevalent, but even when cases are addressed by Sharia courts, women are excluded from the process. Early marriages occur frequently, even though the provisional federal constitution defines a child as a person under 18. In al-Shabaab-controlled areas, young girls are often forced to marry soldiers.<sup>113</sup>

Rape is a crime in Somalia, but the government does not enforce the law; there are no laws against spousal violence, including spousal rape. Women and girls, especially among the country's many internally displaced persons, suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence by government forces, militia members, youth gangs, and other civilians. The police rarely investigate rape, and the government does not prosecute alleged perpetrators. In some cases, rape victims are forced to marry the rapist.<sup>114</sup>

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- 102 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 92, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- 103 Katherlyne S. Loughran et al., eds., *Somalia in Word and Image* (Washington: Foundation for Cross-Cultural Understanding, 1986), 150–59.
- 104 U.S. Department of State, “2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia,” 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Somalia-2018.pdf>
- 105 U.S. Department of State, “2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia,” 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Somalia-2018.pdf>
- 106 Somaliland Law, “House of Elders, Election Law,” 2006, [http://www.somalilandlaw.com/elders\\_selection\\_law.html](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/elders_selection_law.html)
- 107 The New Humanitarian, “Somaliland Women Take on New Roles,” 3 May 2005, <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2005/05/03/somaliland-women-take-new-roles>
- 108 Amina Mohamoud Warsame, “Crisis or Opportunity? Somali Women Traders and the War,” in *Somalia—The Untold Story: The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*, eds. Judith Gardner and Judy El Bushra (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 116–38.
- 109 Fowsia Musse, “War Crimes against Women and Girls,” in *Somalia—The Untold Story: The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*, eds. Judith Gardner and Judy El Bushra (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 69–96.
- 110 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 132–34.
- 111 Sadia Musse Ahmed, “Traditions of Marriage and the Household,” in *Somalia—The Untold Story: The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*, eds. Judith Gardner and Judy El Bushra (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 52–53.
- 112 Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre, “Somalia: Marriage and Divorce,” 14 June 2018, <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Report-Somalia-Marriage-and-divorce-14062018-2.pdf>
- 113 U.S. Department of State, “2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia,” 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Somalia-2018.pdf>
- 114 U.S. Department of State, “2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia,” 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Somalia-2018.pdf>



Some 98% of Somali women experience female genital mutilation (FGM/C), even though the provisional federal constitution prohibits the circumcision of girls and equates the practice with torture. While FGM/C is not supported by Islam, women who are not cut are usually discriminated against and stigmatized.<sup>115, 116</sup> Because the procedure is not criminalized, many politicians are reluctant to speak up against it for fear of losing support.<sup>117</sup> In recent years, however, some Islamic religious leaders and government officials have joined the fight against FGM/C. In 2018, the wife of Somalia's president organized a meeting of more than 100 religious leaders to find ways to end FGM/C in Somalia.<sup>118</sup> That year, Somalia's attorney general announced the first prosecution of an FGM/C case in Somalia's history, after a young girl died from the procedure.<sup>119</sup>

## Arts

### Literature

Somalia's best-known literary tradition is its oral poetry.<sup>120</sup> Somali poets compose verses incorporating metaphors, proverbs, and other elements to communicate news, highlight current events, inspire social action, and ultimately preserve history. Sayidd Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, who fought for Somali self-determination in the early 1900s, became famous largely because of his poetic and oratorical skills.<sup>121</sup> With the advent of electronic recording and broadcast technologies, oral poetry became a tool of widespread political dissent, often through the Somali language service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). When Britain considered ending the Somali language service for financial reasons, Somali leaders said they would rather lose the British embassy than the BBC broadcast.<sup>122</sup>

War and population displacement threaten the tradition of poetry performance.<sup>123</sup> Somalis have been writing Islamic poetry and prose in Arabic since the 1100s.<sup>124</sup> Somali written literature surged after the 1973 introduction of a standardized Somali alphabet. Well-known contemporary authors include the poet Hadraawi (Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame) and the novelist Nuruddin Farah. Hadraawi was imprisoned, and Farah exiled for writing against the Siad Barre regime.<sup>125, 126</sup>

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- 115 U.S. Department of State, "2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia," 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Somalia-2018.pdf>
- 116 WHO, "Prevalence of FGM," UNESCO, 2013, <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/prevalence/en/>
- 117 Doreen Ajiambo, Somali Sheikh Leads a Seven-Year Campaign to End Female Genital Mutilation," Religion News Service, 27 February 2019, <https://religionnews.com/2019/02/27/somali-sheikh-leads-a-seven-year-campaign-to-end-female-genital-mutilation/>
- 118 Doreen Ajiambo, Somali Sheikh Leads a Seven-Year Campaign to End Female Genital Mutilation," Religion News Service, 27 February 2019, <https://religionnews.com/2019/02/27/somali-sheikh-leads-a-seven-year-campaign-to-end-female-genital-mutilation/>
- 119 Kate Hodal, "Death of 10-Year-Old Girl Prompts First FGM Prosecution in Somalia's History," *Guardian*, 26 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jul/26/first-fgm-prosecution-in-somalia-history-death-10-year-old-girl>
- 120 B. W. Andrzejewski, "The Literary Culture of the Somali People," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 23, no. 1 (June 2011): 9, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13696815.2011.581452>
- 121 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Sayyid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan," 3 April 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sayyid-Maxamed-Cabdulle-Xasan>
- 122 I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 251.
- 123 Marian Aguiar, "Somali Songs and Poetry," in *Encyclopedia of Africa*, vol. 1, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 395–96.
- 124 Countries and their Cultures, "Somalia: The Arts and Humanities: Literature," n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Somalia.html>
- 125 Tristan McConnell, "Inside Somalia: Where Poetry Is Revealed," *Global Post*, 30 May 2010, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/africa/100210/inside-somalia-where-poetry-revered?page=full>
- 126 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Nuruddin Farah," 9 April 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nuruddin-Farah>

## Music and Dance

Traditional Somali music begins with a poetic song. There are songs for children, work tasks, religious rituals (including spirit possession), community gatherings, and family celebrations. Hand clapping, foot stamping, drumming, and dancing often accompany singing, especially among young people at weddings, which may last for three days.<sup>127, 128</sup>

Besides drums, traditional Somali instruments include the reed flute, the *kaban* (a four-string guitar), and the *shareero* (lyre) of Mogadishu and the Banaadir region.<sup>129</sup> After Europeans introduced Western-style instrumental music (from which the word *muusiqo* is derived), two centers of early modern Somali music developed.<sup>130</sup> In the northern city of Hargeysa, Abdullahi Qarshe and others created music inspired by pastoralist melodies and poetry. In Mogadishu, Banaadiri Bantu traditions combined with American jazz and Indian Bollywood produced a new sound. Starting in the 1960s, these styles influenced one another, yielding global music genres such as Somali funk.<sup>131, 132</sup>

## Folk Arts

Somalia's nomadic peoples create beautiful, functional objects: baskets, pottery, stoneware, leatherwork, wood carvings, and weapons. Jewelry made of silver, gemstones, and gold functions as portable wealth. By the 14th century, southern settled peoples who worked as textile artisans were producing a white cloth fabric known in Arabic as *futa benaadiiri*. This fabric was used as the Somali traditional dress and exported to Egypt, Arabia, and India. By the 20th century, Somalis had replaced the *futa benaadiiri* with Western clothing.<sup>133, 134, 135</sup>

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- 127 Susan M. Hassig, *Somalia* (Cultures of the World Series) (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000), 110.
- 128 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 169–70, 176–77.
- 129 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 169–70.
- 130 John William Johnson, “Music and Poetry in Somalia” in *Africa: Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 1, ed. Ruth M. Stone (Garland, 1998), 610–21.
- 131 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 174–75.
- 132 Chris Roberts, “Somali Music Is Here, but Hard to Find,” Minnesota Public Radio News, 30 August 2006, <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/08/21/ethnicmusicsomalian>
- 133 Said Sheikh Samatar, “Somali Verbal and Material Arts,” in *Somalia in Word and Image*, eds. Katheryne S. Loughran et al. (Washington, DC: Foundation for Cross-Cultural Understanding, 1986), 31–32.
- 134 Katheryne S. Loughran et al., eds., *Somalia in Word and Image* (Washington, DC: Foundation for Cross-Cultural Understanding, 1986).
- 135 Somalinet, “The Historical Culture of the Nabaadir People,” 21 March 2009, <https://www.somalinet.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=203647>

## Sports and Recreation

Table tennis, soccer, and basketball are popular activities. Somalis also enjoy swimming in rivers and at the seashore, despite the presence of sharks and other dangerous fish.<sup>136</sup> Even though the nation lacks training facilities and coaches, Somalia has sent competitive athletes to the Summer Olympic Games since 1972. In 2016, Somalia sent two athletes to compete in the track and field competition.<sup>137</sup>

Somalis enjoy leisurely conversations with friends. Men gather in tea or coffee shops; women meet with their friends in the home.<sup>138, 139</sup> In addition to talking, men challenge each other in a strategy game called shah, similar to chess.<sup>140</sup> Many men like to chew khat, a mild stimulant.<sup>141</sup>

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- 136 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 100-101, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- 137 Topend Sports, "Somalia at the Olympics," n.d., <https://www.topendsports.com/events/summer/countries/somalia.htm>
- 138 Susan M. Hassig, Zawiah Abdul Latif, and Ruth Bjorklund, *Cultures of the World: Somalia*, (NY: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2017), 96, [https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=tChmDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- 139 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 115–16.
- 140 Janice Hamilton, *Somalia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books [Lerner Publishing Group], 2007) 55.
- 141 Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 153–54.

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 4 | Society, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The majority of Somalis are Sunni Muslims.  True  False
2. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is prevalent in Somalia.  True  False
3. The Somali language uses Arabic script.  True  False
4. Tea is the national drink of Somalia.  True  False
5. Islam is the state religion of Somaliland and Puntland.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 4 | Society, Assessment Answers

1. True:  
More than 99% of the population is Sunni Muslim. Somali Bantu who inhabit the ers are Muslims who also continue to practice traditional animist beliefs. Somali Muslims belong predominantly to the Shafi'i sect of Sunni Islam.
2. True:  
About 98% of Somali women experience FGM/C, even though the provisional federal constitution prohibits the practice and equates it with torture. In 2018, Somalia's attorney general announced the first prosecution of an FGM/C case in Somalia's history, after a young girl died from the procedure.
3. False:  
In 1972, the government chose a modified form of the Latin alphabet as the official script for written Somali. The Somali language had no written alphabet until 1972.
4. True:  
Somalis believe that hot, sugary tea quenches thirst better than cool water. It is common to drink 4–6 cups of sweet tea in a day. Tea is served plain and strong or sweet and milky, infused with fruit and spices.
5. True:  
The provisional constitution and the constitutions of Somaliland and Puntland make Islam the state religion, prohibit Muslims from converting, prohibit proselytizing by other religions, criminalize blasphemy, and stipulate that all laws must comply with Sharia.

## Chapter 5 | Security



Once one of Mogadishu's most luxurious hotels, the Al-Uruba lays in ruins after two decades of civil war  
Flickr / AMISOM Public Information

### Introduction

Since independence in 1960, Somalia has frequently engaged in warfare and conflicts with its neighbors, often over disputed borders. A coup in 1969 installed Siad Barre as Somalia's president. Barre ran an aggressive regime until 1991 when his government was overthrown, and the country descended into civil war. Power struggles between warlords and clans played out for more than 20 years, creating an opening for the rise of al-Shabaab, a terror group that has pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. The civil war continued during efforts to broker peace until neighboring countries and the African Union (AU) launched military operations to quell the violence and stabilize the region. The often-stalled efforts to establish a functioning government bore fruit on 20 August 2012, when a new constitution was adopted, and a new parliament was inaugurated.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

Despite this significant progress, Somalia remains unstable and extremely dangerous. The U.S. State Department advises against any travel to Somalia due to substantial threats of crime, terrorism, kidnapping, and piracy. More

- 1 UN News, "Ban Welcomes Inauguration of Somali Parliament as 'Watershed Moment,'" 20 August 2012, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2012/08/417872-ban-welcomes-inauguration-somali-parliament-watershed-moment>
- 2 Ecoi.net, "Security Situation in Somalia," 12 August 2019, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/countries/somalia/featured-topics/security-situation/>
- 3 Central Intelligence Agency, "Somalia: Background," *The World Factbook*, 23 September 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

than 2 million people have been displaced in the region, worsening an already devastating humanitarian crisis.<sup>4</sup> <sup>5, 6</sup> Since the AU's intervention in Somalia dubbed the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), security has been managed by the intervening forces. With the federal government established, the AU is moving toward transferring security matters to Somalia by December 2021. This deadline is considered ambitious, given the persistent threats from terrorist groups like al-Shabaab.<sup>7</sup>

## U.S.–Somali Relations

Diplomatic relations between the United States and Somalia began at Somalia's independence. Relations were complicated by the instability that hampered the Somali government in the 1970s, reaching a low point due to Somali aggression against neighboring Ethiopia. During this time, the Soviet Union intervened in the region in an effort to undermine the United States as the Ogaden War commenced between Ethiopia and Somalia.<sup>8</sup> The Soviets assisted Ethiopia in defeating Somalia, but the tactic ultimately failed—the United States committed itself to be a stabilizing power in the region through economic and military aid, which granted it access to strategic Somali seaports and airfields.<sup>9, 10, 11</sup>

Troubling human rights violations and unpaid debts caused the United States to cease all aid during the final years of the Barre regime.<sup>12, 13</sup> Upon the ousting of Barre in 1991, the United States closed its embassy, signaling that diplomatic relations between the two countries had become non-existent. Beginning in 1992, the United States began a military intervention campaign in Somalia as the civil war raged on. In October 1993, during the First Battle of Mogadishu, an attempted raid by U.S. special operations forces resulted in the downing of two Black Hawk helicopters by Somali fighters. The ensuing battle cost the lives of 18 U.S. servicemen and as many as 1,00 Somalis. The United States ceased its military operations in Somalia the following year.<sup>14, 15</sup>

In 2006, the legal and political group Islamic Courts Union (ICU) emerged in Somalia. ICU sought to counter the creation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and implement Sharia law in the country. The TFG was established with international support from the United States, the UN, and the AU as a means to end the civil war. Al-Shabaab emerged during this time as an offshoot of ICU and began targeting members of the TFG for assassination. A group of Somali warlords joined forces as the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, declared al-Shabaab a terrorist organization, and appealed to the United States to help combat ICU and al-Shabaab. By 2008, the United States followed suit and declared al-Shabaab a terrorist organization. In

4 U.S. Department of State, "Somalia Travel Advisory," 9 April 2019, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/somalia-travel-advisory.html>

5 Human Rights Watch, "Somalia: Events of 2018," 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/somalia>

6 BBC News, "Somalia Country Profile," 4 January 2018, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country\\_profiles/1072592.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm)

7 Alice Hills, "Somalia's Security Challenges Complicate Transfer of Responsibility to Government," *IPI Global Observatory*, 11 March 2019, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/03/somalia-security-challenges-complicate-transfer-government/>

8 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., "Ethiopia: History: The Mengistu Regime and Its Impact," in *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1991), <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/31.htm>

9 Helen Chapin Metz ed., "Somalia: History: From Independence to Revolution: Foreign Relations, 1960–69," in *Somalia: A Country Study*, (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/15.htm>

10 GlobalSecurity.org, "Somalia-US Relations," 19 November 2015, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/somalia/forrel-us.htm>

11 AllAfrica, "Somalia and the United States: A Long and Troubled History," 21 January 2002, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200201210455.html>

12 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., "Somalia: Government: Relations with the United States," *Somalia: A Country Study*, (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/80.htm>

13 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Somalia," 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>

14 Conor Gaffey, "A Short History of Somali-U.S. Relations," *Newsweek*, 10 August 2016, <https://www.newsweek.com/short-history-somali-us-relations-489125>

15 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Somalia," 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>

2014, al-Shabaab declared its allegiance to al-Qaeda., The United States, alongside AMISOM actively participates in military action against al-Shabaab.<sup>16, 17, 18</sup>

In 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) was officially inaugurated; the United States formally acknowledged the newly-formed government in January 2013. Somalia’s embassy reopened in Washington DC in 2015, and the U.S. embassy reopened in Somalia in 2018. As the new government of Somalia seeks to stabilize and secure the country, AMISOM and its allies continue operations against al-Shabaab. Currently, the United States provides more than USD 3 billion in humanitarian assistance to Somalia and has provided more than USD 250 million to support the economic, political, and social sectors.<sup>19, 20</sup>

## Relations with Neighboring Countries

### Kenya

Somalia’s relations with Kenya have historically been tense and punctuated with violent skirmishes. Upon Kenya’s independence in 1963, tensions arose over Somalia’s desire to reclaim the land that it once occupied, a concept known as irredentism. The irredentist claims focused mainly on Kenya’s Northern Frontier District (NFD), which is home to large Somali and Oromo populations. Unrest grew over time, leading to violent campaigns by *shiftras*, or Somali dissidents against Kenyan forces. In 1977, Kenya backed Ethiopia during the Ogaden War, in part as a reaction to renewed *shiftra* activity, while Somalia publicly claimed it wanted peace along their shared border. Attempts to resolve the conflict met with some success, but Kenya remains cautious in its stance toward Somalia.<sup>21, 22</sup>

Somalia has an ongoing maritime border dispute with Kenya over a 100,000 square km (38,600 sq mi) area in the Indian Ocean, potentially rich in oil and gas, about 270 km (168 mi) from the shoreline. When Kenya marked the disputed territory for licensing, Somalia accused Kenya of stealing its oil and took the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2014. Kenya claims that this dispute was initially settled in 1979, but the relevant documents were lost in the 1990s war in Somalia. Kenya also claims that it was settled for a second time in 2009 when the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding for the maritime border. The case is awaiting a final ruling by the ICJ in 2019.<sup>23, 24</sup> In the summer of 2019, both Kenya and Somalia threatened intervene militarily to protect what they saw as their territory from the other’s aggression.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, some signs of reconciliation emerged the same year at a UN General Assembly meeting in New York.<sup>26, 27, 28</sup>

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- 16 Harvard Divinity School, “The Islamic Courts Union,” n.d., <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/islamic-courts-union>
- 17 Conor Gaffey, “A Short History of Somali-U.S. Relations,” *Newsweek*, 10 August 2016, <https://www.newsweek.com/short-history-somali-us-relations-489125>
- 18 U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Relations with Somalia,” 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>
- 19 GlobalSecurity.org, “Somalia-US Relations,” 19 November 2015, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/somalia/forrel-us.htm>
- 20 U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Relations with Somalia,” 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>
- 21 African Studies Center, “East Africa Living Encyclopedia: Kenya—Foreign Relations,” n.d., <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/kforeignrelation.htm>
- 22 GlobalSecurity.org, “Somalia and the Shiftra Conflict,” 24 May 2015, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/shiftra.htm>
- 23 Fauxile Kibet, “New Twist to Somali Border Case against Kenya,” KASS FM, 14 February 2018, <http://www.kassfm.co.ke/home/2018/02/14/new-twist-to-somali-border-case-against-kenya/>
- 24 The Standard, “Kenya to Compensate Somalia for Oil Exploration on Disputed Sea Area,” 7 January 2018, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/world/africa/kenya-likely-to-compensate-somalia-for-oil-exploration-on-disputed-sea-area>
- 25 Mohammed Yusuf, “Kenya, Somalia Trade Threats in Indian Ocean Dispute,” VOA, 15 August 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/kenya-somalia-trade-threats-indian-ocean-dispute>
- 26 Emmah Wabuke, “The Kenya–Somali Maritime Dispute and Its Potential National Security Costs,” *Lawfare*, 15 May 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/kenya%E2%80%93somalia-maritime-dispute-and-its-potential-national-security-costs>
- 27 Brian Wasuna and Aggrey Mutambo, “Property Spat Strains Already Frayed Kenya-Somalia Relations,” *The East African*, 14 September 2019, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Property-spat-strains-already-frayed-kenya-somalia-relations/4552908-5272896-g4e6b5/index.html>
- 28 Andalou Agency, “Somalia, Kenya Agree to Normalize Bilateral Relations,” 25 September 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somalia-kenya-agree-to-normalize-bilateral-relations/1593983>



The Somali civil war has created a long-term humanitarian crisis in the region since it began in 1991. Within Kenya, the majority of displaced people come from Somalia, making up an estimated 54.5% of Kenya's total refugee population.<sup>29</sup> For decades, the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya has housed hundreds of thousands of Somalis fleeing natural disasters or violence. In recent years, Kenya has pushed to close Dadaab, citing fears that al-Shabaab is using it as a base of operations.<sup>30</sup> Joint operations against al-Shabaab have resulted in a climate of increased cooperation between the two nations.<sup>31, 32, 33</sup>

## Ethiopia

Intermittent conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia has existed since colonial times. The two countries' shared border is often at the heart of the animosity. At times, tensions have risen to the level of open warfare, as was the case with the Ogaden War of 1977–78. Somalia was the instigator of the clash, motivated by Siad Barre's irredentist policies.<sup>34, 35</sup>

The Ogaden remains tumultuous, and violence-prone region. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a separatist organization, operates there and claims to represent the interests of its significant Somali population.<sup>36</sup> ONLF has carried out violent attacks within Ethiopia, such as the 2007 attack on an oil field, in which 70 people were killed. Attempts at reconciliation between Ethiopia, ONLF, and Somalia have been made in recent times. In 2018, the Ethiopian government removed the ONLF from its terrorist groups list and signed a peace agreement later that year.<sup>37, 38</sup> In 2019, Somalia and ONLF entered into an agreement for joint efforts to ease poverty and human rights abuses. The U.S. State Department does not include the ONLF on its Foreign Terrorist Organization list.<sup>39, 40, 41, 42</sup>

Political turmoil in both countries saw the regimes of Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam and Somalia's Siad Barre overthrown in 1991.<sup>43, 44</sup> With the founding of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Horn

- 29 UNHCR, "Kenya: Figures at a Glance," May 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/figures-at-a-glance>
- 30 Nita Bhalla, "Kenya Orders Closure of Dadaab Refugee Camp This Year, According to Leaked U.N. Document," *Reuters*, 29 March 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-refugees-somalia/kenya-orders-closure-of-dadaab-refugee-camp-this-year-according-to-leaked-un-document-idUSKCN1RA1FN>
- 31 Emmah Wabuke, "The Kenya–Somali Maritime Dispute and Its Potential National Security Costs," *Lawfare*, 15 May 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/kenya%E2%80%93somalia-maritime-dispute-and-its-potential-national-security-costs>
- 32 Brian Wasuna and Aggrey Mutambo, "Property Spat Strains Already Frayed Kenya-Somalia Relations," *The East African*, 14 September 2019, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Property-spat-strains-already-frayed-kenya-somalia-relations/4552908-5272896-g4e6b5/index.html>
- 33 Andalou Agency, "Somalia, Kenya Agree to Normalize Bilateral Relations," 25 September 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somalia-kenya-agree-to-normalize-bilateral-relations/1593983>
- 34 Don Oberdorfer, "The Superpowers and the Ogaden War," *Washington Post*, 5 March 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/03/05/the-superpowers-and-the-ogaden-war/00f60ef2-01b4-4cd3-8c5f-e545df388def/>
- 35 Andy S. Lee, "The Disputed Ogaden: the Roots of Ethiopia and Somalia's Conflict," *McGill International Review*, 23 February 2019, <https://www.mironline.ca/the-disputed-ogaden-the-roots-of-ethiopia-and-somalias-conflict/>
- 36 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Somalia," 13 August 2018, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>
- 37 Aaron Maasho, "Ethiopia Signs Peace Deal with Rebels from Gas-Rich Region," *Reuters*, 21 October 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/africaTech/idAFL8N1X112N>
- 38 Namhla Matshanda, "Ethiopia is Mending Relations with Its Neighbours under Its New Prime Minister," *World Economic Forum*, 21 November 2018, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/how-events-in-ethiopia-will-influence-the-horn-of-africa>
- 39 Rebecca Bloom and Eben Kaplan, "Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)," Council on Foreign Relations, 1 November 2007, <https://www.cfr.org/background/ogaden-national-liberation-front-onlf>
- 40 Don Oberdorfer, "The Superpowers and the Ogaden War," *Washington Post*, 5 March 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/03/05/the-superpowers-and-the-ogaden-war/00f60ef2-01b4-4cd3-8c5f-e545df388def/>
- 41 Jeffrey Gettleman, "Ethiopian Rebels Kill 70 at Chinese-Run Oil Field," *New York Times*, 25 April 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/25/world/africa/25ethiopia.html>
- 42 Daniel Mumbere, "Ethiopia: ONLY Rebels Disarm, Sign Agreement with Somali State," *Africa News*, 9 February 2019, <https://www.africanews.com/2019/02/09/ethiopia-onlf-rebels-disarm-sign-agreement-with-somali-state/>
- 43 Human Rights Watch, "Ethiopian Dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam," 24 November 1999, <https://www.hrw.org/news/1999/11/24/ethiopian-dictator-mengistu-haile-mariam>
- 44 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Mohamed Siad Barre," 1 January 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohamed-Siad-Barre>

of Africa, a coalition of nations alongside the Organization of African Unity put forth a concerted effort to secure peace in the region as Somalia's civil war raged on. IGAD's intervention in countries like Sudan and Somalia spurred Ethiopia's desire to help establish stability in Somalia. A number of nations joined the Somali peace process, culminating in the creation of the Transitional National Government in 2000.<sup>45, 46</sup>

As al-Shabaab and ICU continued to thwart efforts to establish a democratic government in Somalia, Ethiopia took steps to align itself with Somalia's governmental forces; this reconciliatory relationship has continued since the establishment of the FGS. As part of this relationship, the Ethiopian military has operated in Somalia to combat threats like al-Shabaab.<sup>47, 48</sup> Ethiopia is also rumored to be playing a mediation role in attempts to mend the relationship between Somalia and Somaliland.<sup>49</sup>

## Djibouti

Djibouti, which was formerly both French Somaliland and the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, gained independence in 1977. Djibouti's relations with Somalia run deep and are rooted in Djibouti's Issa people, who are ethnic Somalis and, at around 60% of the population, make up the largest group in the country.<sup>50, 51, 52</sup>

Djibouti's relationship with Somalia changed drastically in 1991 as the civil war displaced thousands of people.<sup>53</sup> Warfare and drought in Somalia are two of the leading causes of refugees seeking asylum in Djibouti.<sup>54</sup> More than 27,000 refugees from Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, and Yemen currently reside in camps in Djibouti. The Ali Addeh refugee camp alone houses 15,000 Somalis, many of whom were born in the camp.<sup>55</sup> Djibouti's government has passed legislation to protect refugees and adheres to the UN's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, which seeks to protect refugees and host nations.<sup>56</sup> In the run-up to the establishment of the FSG, Djibouti joined AU efforts to combat Islamic extremism.<sup>57</sup>

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- 45 UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "Ethiopia: Overview," 31 August 2019, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth>
- 46 Sally Healy, "Seeking Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa: The Contribution of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 87, no. 1 (2011): 105-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20869613>
- 47 Andy S. Lee, "The Disputed Ogaden: the Roots of Ethiopia and Somalia's Conflict," *McGill International Review*, 23 February 2019, <https://www.mironline.ca/the-disputed-ogaden-the-roots-of-ethiopia-and-somalias-conflict/>
- 48 BBC News, "Somalia Profile—Timeline," 4 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094632>
- 49 Daniel Mumbere, "Is Ethiopia Mediating a Deal Between Somalia and Somaliland," *Africa News*, 21 February 2019, <https://www.africanews.com/2019/02/21/is-ethiopia-mediating-a-deal-between-somalia-and-somaliland/>
- 50 BBC News, "Djibouti Profile—Timeline," 8 May 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13232162>
- 51 Joshua Project, "Somali, Issa in Djibouti," 2019, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/14983/DJ](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/14983/DJ)
- 52 Central Intelligence Agency, "Djibouti," *The World Factbook*, 24 September 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dj.html>
- 53 Karen Attiah, "Yemen's Refugees Pose a Threat to Somalia," *Washington Post*, 24 April 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/04/24/yemens-refugees-pose-a-threat-to-somalia/>
- 54 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Djibouti," 22 February 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Djibouti-capital>
- 55 Catherine Wachiyaya, "UN Refugees Chief Praises Djibouti New Refugee Laws," UNHCR, 15 December 2017, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/12/5a3416654/un-refugee-chief-praises-djibouti-new-refugee-laws.html>
- 56 UNHCR, "Djibouti," March 2018, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/djibouti.html>
- 57 World Atlas, "Djibouti History Timeline," 7 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/djibouti/djtimeln2.htm#page>

## Eritrea

After a decades-long struggle for independence, Eritrea realized its goal in 1993, gaining independence from Ethiopia in a referendum.<sup>58</sup> Eritrea was combative toward Somalia prior to the establishment of the FGS, refusing to acknowledge the Transitional Federal Government.<sup>59</sup> Eritrea was accused of arming the ICU and supporting other Islamic organizations, such as al-Shabaab, during the mid-2000s, challenging attempts at establishing a functional government in Somalia. Eventually, regional powers such as Ethiopia intervened and attacked Eritrea. Eritrean support of terrorist organizations seemed to taper off at this point, and by 2014, the UN was unable to find any evidence that Eritrea supported al-Shabaab.<sup>60</sup> Hostile attitudes persisted between the two countries, although there are signs that both sides are warming to one another.<sup>61</sup> In the summer of 2018, the presidents of Eritrea and Somalia signed an agreement that established diplomatic relations between the two countries after nearly 15 years. The two sides also signed a peace deal, ending conflicts over border disputes.<sup>62</sup>

## Yemen

Yemen came into its own as an independent nation in 1918 following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>63</sup> Yemen's amicable relationship with Somalia has endured for decades, bolstered by Yemen's role as a prominent destination for Somali refugees fleeing the civil war.<sup>64</sup> Both countries have established embassies for each other, signifying stable relations.<sup>65, 66</sup> In time, however, Yemen itself fell into chaos and civil war, with Somalia supporting the Yemeni government against the rebels during the ongoing conflict. As conditions worsen in Yemen, many Somalis who sought asylum in Yemen have opted to return home.<sup>67, 68, 69</sup>

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- 58 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Eritrea," 24 September 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html>
- 59 Shabait.com, Eritrea Ministry of Information, "Press Release: A Shameful Day for the United Nations," 23 December 2009, <http://www.shabait.com/editorial/press-release/728-press-release->
- 60 Global Security, "Eritrea-Somalia Relations," 30 June 2015, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/eritrea/forrel-somalia.htm>
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- 62 Al Jazeera, "Eritrea and Somalia Agree to Restore Diplomatic Relations," 30 July 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/eritrea-somalia-agree-restore-diplomatic-relations-180730152410668.html>
- 63 BBC News, "Yemen Profile—Timeline," 18 February 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704951>
- 64 Laura Kasinof, "Somalis Still Flood Yemen, Going from Worse to Bad," *New York Times*, 9 December 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/10/world/middleeast/somalis-still-flood-yemen-going-from-worse-to-bad.html>
- 65 Embassy Pages, "Embassy of Yemen in Mogadishu, Somalia," n.d., <https://www.embassypages.com/missions/embassy22378/>
- 66 Embassy Pages, "Embassy of Somalia in Sana'a, Yemen," n.d., <https://www.embassypages.com/missions/embassy22364/>
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- 69 UNHCR, "Amid Worsening Conditions in Yemen, More Somali Refugees Opt to Return," 31 May 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2019/5/5cf0e7eb4/amid-worsening-conditions-yemen-somali-refugees-opt-return.html>

## Police

The Somali Police Force (SPF) traces its history to the region's colonial period when Great Britain and Italy occupied territory there. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the colonists established their own police forces, which were either disbanded or absorbed into the SPF when Somalia became independent in 1960. In time, the SPF grew in strength and stature. The Darawishta Poliska was an offshoot of the SPF, tasked with maintaining peace between Somalia's warring clans; the Birmadka Poliska was a special organization tasked with riot control. Control of the SPF shifted in the mid-1970s when the force saw its role expand to include patrols, traffic management, intelligence, investigations, and counterinsurgency. The Somali civil war sent the SPF into disarray and caused the Darawishta and Birmadka to cease operations.<sup>70</sup>

AMISOM entered Somalia in 2007 to provide security for the TFG. Initially, AMISOM was headed up by the AU countries most threatened by Somalia's instability—Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopia. Just under 20,000 AMISOM troops will remain in Somalia by February 2020, in accordance with the most recent approved UN Security Council resolution in 2019. The AMISOM mission will eventually shift toward analysis of ground conditions in order to determine a final drawdown.<sup>71, 72, 73</sup> The UN has also provided security through the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSON). UNSON supports the FGS and assists in election security as well as the implementation of the transition plan.<sup>74</sup>

The SPF began to rebuild itself in the 2000s and unveiled a new police academy in Armo in 2005.<sup>75</sup> Rebuilding and bolstering the SPF has been an international effort, with joint training and exercises still staged as the transition continues.<sup>76, 77, 78</sup> As landmarks in the Somali Transition Plan are achieved, AMISOM has turned over control of security facilities to the SPF.<sup>79</sup>

70 Library of Congress, "Country Listing—Somalia," Federal Research Division, n.d., <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12056.html>

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## Military

After independence, the Somali armed forces became entangled in Siad Barre's territorial ambitions.<sup>80</sup> With the fall of his regime, the government collapsed, and the armed forces dissolved, its personnel dispersed, and its equipment fell into the hands of warring clans. As the infrastructure for national security essentially collapsed, clan feuds intensified.<sup>81, 82, 83</sup> In 1992, a UN peacekeeping operation began, and the United States and allies launched Operation Restore Hope to provide protection for humanitarian efforts.<sup>84</sup> The situation in Somalia proved to be insoluble, and by 1995, the United States and UN had both fully withdrawn their troops as the clan warfare continued to tear the country apart.<sup>85</sup>

Support from the UN and AU continued despite initial setbacks during the early years of the civil war. By 2016, the Somali National Army (SNA) was significantly rebuilt by the international community—to about 20,000 members—as the fight against al-Shabaab intensified. Progress on rebuilding the military in Somalia has proven rocky; funding has been inconsistent, and logistical roadblocks caused by longstanding embargoes or other international restrictions have hampered development. A scandal involving underage recruits brought stronger UNSOM oversight of SNA enlistees.<sup>86</sup> Despite over a decade of direct support from the international community, the SNA is struggling to overcome failures and setbacks and stand on its own. In 2019, Somalia's military ranked 130 out of 137 on a global strength ranking.<sup>87, 88, 89</sup>

## Issues Affecting Instability

### Radical Groups

Somalia's militant groups grew with the advent of the civil war. Numerous warlords, clans, and extremist Islamist groups vied for control of Somalia as repeated efforts to establish a legitimate government were thwarted. With the rise of the short-lived ICU came the lasting threat of al-Shabaab, Somalia's most formidable terrorist organization. However, while Al-Shabaab might be the most prominent group in operation, several others threaten the security of the country.<sup>90</sup>

Al-Shabaab, the militant wing of the now-defunct ICU, pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, the same year the FGS was inaugurated. Al-Shabaab's goal is to establish an Islamic state, first in Somalia, and then across

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the entire Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab's roots precede the creation of the ICU, going back to the extremist group al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI), which opposed Siad Barre's regime in the lead-up to the civil war. A subgroup of AIAI joined ICU and rebranded itself al-Shabaab. Among al-Shabaab's most violent attacks was the September 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, in which 68 people died, and close to 200 were injured. Al-Shabaab leverages the ineptitude and corruption plaguing the FGS to recruit new members. As of 2019, the group's terrorist activities did not appear to be slowing down, as they moved into urban areas and increased their attacks.<sup>91, 92, 93, 94</sup>

Despite the breaking off of the group that would later become al-Shabaab, AIAI has persisted and remains a threat to the FGS today. The group was founded in 1982 as part of a plan by Osama bin Laden to establish an al-Qaeda stronghold in the region. AIAI still stages attacks and kidnappings throughout Somalia, although the group's power and influence have waned.<sup>95</sup>

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) announced its presence in the region with the establishment of a training camp in the Puntland region of northeastern Somalia. ISIS has received support from places like Yemen and other Gulf states. Yet its numbers are relatively small, and the group hasn't had as much of an impact on the region as other militant Islamic groups.<sup>96</sup>

Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ), or the "People of the Sunna and Community," is a militia that seeks to unite and protect Somalia's Sufi religious orders, which has led to armed conflict with Islamic extremist groups operating in the region. Founded in 1991, the group holds no clan affiliation but has received support from clans as it combats militant Islamic groups.<sup>97, 98</sup>

## Piracy

Piracy was a major crisis between 2007 and 2012 as attacks on cargo ships and other vessels off the Somali coast were an almost daily occurrence. In 2011 alone, there were 237 attacks that resulted in USD 8.3 billion in losses. The UN Security Council deployed joint forces to the region to stomp out piracy and patrol the region; the mission was a remarkable success. By 2017 there were just nine attacks.<sup>99</sup> The UN recently renewed the joint operations authorization to continue combating piracy in the region.<sup>100</sup>

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## Internally Displaced Persons

Humanitarian crises and natural disasters have displaced untold numbers of people within Somalia. Neighboring countries like Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya continue to house Somali refugees indefinitely.<sup>101, 102</sup> Refugee settlements suffer from overcrowding and poor conditions, as severe droughts drive more and more people there.<sup>103</sup> The UN estimates that more than 2 million people have been displaced in Somalia since the civil war began, with around 1.5 million of them internally displaced.<sup>104</sup>

## Cyber Security

Either despite or because of the fragility of physical law and order, the use of mobile phone-based digital services has become widespread in Somalia. By one account, over a quarter of the people of Somaliland pay their bills through their phones, the highest such percentage in the world. While not foolproof, mobile money transfers have significantly reduced the likelihood of graft and corruption. Technology companies, eager to project an image of dependability and fairness, have emerged as the go-to arbiters in case of financial disputes.<sup>105</sup>

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications is responsible for cyber security issues. Cyber incidents are widespread, often targeting government networks. Typical incidents include hacking emails, stealing passwords, and compromising data. Perpetrators are believed to operate both in and outside Somalia. The government does not have a national cyber security policy or a dedicated cybercrime investigating body.<sup>106</sup>

## Water Security

Somalia is a semiarid to arid land, with an annual daytime temperature of 27°C (80°F). Surface water is the primary water resource, primarily from the Juba and Shabelle rivers.<sup>107, 108</sup> Rainfall varies greatly year to year, and drought, which used to occur once every decade, is now more frequent and more severe, occurring every two or three years.<sup>109</sup> The flooding that follows dry seasons spreads waterborne diseases.<sup>110</sup> Ethiopia controls nearly half the flow of the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Other regions rely on shallow wells, springs, surface dams, and boreholes.<sup>111</sup>

Water usage is almost entirely for livestock and agricultural irrigation. Drinking water is scarce and often contaminated.<sup>112</sup> UNICEF estimates that only 45% of the population has access to reliable water sources, and

101 Diana Diaz, “Hungry and Desperate, Thousands of Somalis Trek to Ethiopia,” *UNHCR*, 25 March 2017, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/3/58d2585a4/hungry-desperate-thousands-somalis-trek-ethiopia.html>

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112 Aquastat, “Country Profile: Somalia,” 2005, [http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries\\_regions/SOM/SOM-CP\\_eng.pdf](http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/SOM/SOM-CP_eng.pdf)

only 25% have access to nearby reliable sanitation facilities. These factors come together to perpetuate diseases throughout the country. The cost of clean water often limits access for Somalis living in poverty. The international community has had a sustained presence in Somalia, helping improve water quality and access.<sup>113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118</sup>

## Outlook

Stability is of utmost importance for the FGS as Somalia's government re-establishes its institutions in the midst of an ongoing civil war.<sup>119</sup> Political corruption, terrorism, and natural disasters continue to hamper progress in the country. Assistance from AMISOM, UNSOM, and the greater international community continue to produce some results and secure Somalia's land and waters. Somalia continues to cement its presence on the world stage by forming economic and diplomatic relations with its neighbors. Although slow and fraught with setbacks, Somalia continues to fight for a better tomorrow.<sup>120, 121, 122</sup>

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# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 5 | Security, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States and Ethiopia.  True  False
2. Since the death of 18 U.S. servicemen in Somalia in 1993, the United States has maintained a policy of nonintervention in Somalia.  True  False
3. The Somali civil war has created a long-term humanitarian crisis in the region.  True  False
4. Somalia's military strength ranks among lowest in the world.  True  False
5. Piracy near the Somali coast poses a serious threat to international shipping.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Chapter 5 | Security, Assessment Answers

1. False:  
In 2018, the Ethiopian government removed the ONLF from its terrorist groups list as a gesture toward reconciliation. The U.S. State Department does not include the ONLF on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list.
2. False:  
The United States ceased operations in Somalia after the chaotic events of the First Battle of Mogadishu. However, it has formally supported the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) along with the international community and actively participates in military action against al-Shabaab.
3. True:  
The majority of displaced people in Kenya come from Somalia, making up nearly 55% of Kenya's total refugee population. In Djibouti, the Ali Addeh refugee camp houses 15,000 Somali refugees, many of whom were born in the camp.
4. True: In  
2019, Somalia's military ranked 130 out of 137 on a military strength ranking. Progress on rebuilding the military has proven rocky; funding has been inconsistent and logistical roadblocks have hampered development.
5. False: In  
2011, reports of piracy in the waters around Somalia and the Horn of Africa almost averaged one a day. After the UN Security Council authorized joint operations in the region, attacks dropped drastically. In 2017, only 9 attacks were reported.

# Somalia in Perspective

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# Somalia in Perspective

## Final Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Somalia was known to the ancient Egyptians as Abyssinia.  True  False
2. Daarood is one of Somalia's big clans.  True  False
3. *Gu* and *deyr* are the two rainy seasons of Somalia.  True  False
4. The Jubba and the Shabelle are Somalia's two main rivers, originating in Ethiopia and flowing through southwest Somalia into the Indian Ocean.  True  False
5. Somalia's northern coastal plain is a hot semiarid region.  True  False
6. Wood charcoal is an important part of agricultural production and is supported by the government.  True  False
7. Kismaayo is the highest point of the Karkaar mountain range located in north-central Somalia.  True  False
8. Puntland is an autonomous region in northeast Somalia.  True  False
9. *Guntiino* means cyclone in the Somali language.  True  False
10. Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, is located on the Indian Ocean just north of the equator.  True  False

11. Owing to its long coastline and two major rivers, Somalia has a thriving fishing sector.  True  False
12. Somaliland has its own currency.  True  False
13. Oral poetry is Somalia's best-known literary tradition.  True  False
14. Milk is a major food source for herders and nomadic families.  True  False
15. General Siad Barre was elected president of Somalia shortly after Somalia gained independence.  True  False
16. President Barre's official ideology was called "Scientific Socialism."  True  False
17. Somalia defeated Kenya in the Ogaden War (1977–1978) with the help of Britain.  True  False
18. Somalia's civil war began when Islamist insurgents tried to topple President Siad Barre and his government.  True  False
19. August 2012 marked the end of the civil war and put Somalia on the road to recovery.  True  False
20. The Ogaden highlands stretch along the northern part of the Horn of Africa. The highlands provide grounds for livestock grazing throughout the year.  True  False
21. Dadaab is one of the terrorist groups that operate within Somalia. The group pledged allegiance to ISIS with the goal of ridding Somalia of Western influences.  True  False

22. Somalia has a border dispute with Kenya over territory in the Indian Ocean.  True  False
23. Al-Shabaab is a rebel group that operates in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and claims to represent the interests of its significant Somali population. Somalia helped bring the two sides to the negotiating table.  True  False
24. Somalia has no diplomatic relations with Eritrea because of Eritrea's support of radical Islamic organizations.  True  False
25. AMISOM is a regional peacekeeping mission that is operating in Somalia.  True  False

# Somalia in Perspective

## Final Assessment Answers

1. False:  
Somalia was known to the ancient Egyptians as the Land of Punt (“God’s Land”). The area was the destination of Cushite people who migrated toward the coast from the Ethiopian and Kenyan highlands of eastern Africa’s Great Rift Valley.
2. True:  
The Daarood (Darod) is the largest clan among all Somalis across borders. The clan families inhabit the northern region of Somalia—the clan formed the autonomous region of Puntland—and are also present in Gedo and Kismayo. President Siad Barre came from the Marehan sub-clan of the Daarood.
3. True:  
Somalia’s climatic year is divided into four seasons: two dry seasons and two wet seasons. The main rainfall season, *gu*, occurs from April to June. The second rainfall season, *deyr*, lasts from October to December.
4. True:  
The Juba and Shabelle rivers run through the southwest of the country. The river basins are the center of Somalia’s agricultural activity. During heavy rainy seasons, the Shabelle may connect with the Jubba.
5. True:  
The northern coastal plain is called the Guban (scrubland). It is parallel to the Gulf of Aden between the port cities of Zeila in the west to Berbera in the east. This lowland area is hot, humid, and arid. When rain falls, scrub vegetation grows quickly, providing food for livestock.
6. False:  
Somalis who have no other economic options produce charcoal, which is sold to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. This unregulated industry supports local militias, destroys acacia forests, increases deforestation, and pollutes the environment.
7. False:  
Kismaayo is the second largest metropolitan area in southern Somalia after Mogadishu, and one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Somalia. The city lies on the coast of the Indian Ocean, near the mouth of the Jubba River.
8. True:  
Puntland is an arid region of north-east Somalia. Puntland declared itself an autonomous state in August 1998, in part to avoid the clan warfare that raged in southern Somalia. Puntland does not seek recognition as an independent state.
9. False:  
*Guntiino* is a brightly-colored, full length dress similar to an Indian sari that Somali women wrap around their bodies and tie over one shoulder.



10. True:  
Mogadishu is Somalia's capital and home to a major deep-water port. Mogadishu was the capital of Italian Somaliland in the 1930s. In 1960, when Italian Somaliland united with British Somaliland, Mogadishu became the capital of the Republic of Somalia.
11. False:  
Somalia's fishing sector is acutely underdeveloped due to a lack of skills among fishermen; a lack of boats, fishing gears, cold storage, and processing facilities; a lack of regulatory frameworks; and a lack of good roads to transport fresh fish to markets.
12. True:  
Somaliland uses the Somaliland shilling (SOS) as its currency. However, the currency is not recognized by the international community and is not used in international trade.
13. True:  
Somali poets compose verses incorporating metaphors, proverbs, and other elements to communicate news, inspire social action, and preserve history. With the advent of electronic recording and broadcast technologies, oral poetry became a tool of widespread political dissent.
14. True:  
Herders drink milk from camels, goats, or cows. Camel herders may drink up to ten quarts of milk a day during the rainy season.
15. False:  
Siad Barre became president after the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke and a military coup that deposed the civilian government in October 1969.
16. True:  
President Siad Barre promoted "Scientific Socialism" as an alternative to clan infighting and proclaimed Somalia a socialist republic. The government nationalized banks, insurance companies, and petroleum distribution companies. A government plan promised a higher standard of living for Somalis, jobs, and the eradication of capitalist exploitation.
17. False:  
In 1977, Somalia engaged in a brief war over the Ogaden region with Ethiopia. Moscow sent Cuban troops and Soviet advisors to Ethiopia, and the conflict ended with Somalia's defeat.
18. False:  
The war started as a power struggle among two rival Hawiye warlords and Siad Barre's clan militia the Somali National Front; only later did it become an Islamic insurgency.
19. True:  
In August 2012, Somalia swore in its first formal parliament in more than 20 years, ending an eight-year transitional period. A month later, in the first presidential election since 1967, the parliament elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president of the new FGS (Federal Government of Somalia).

20. False:  
The Ogaden Highlands are an arid region that occupies the plain between the Somalia-Ethiopia border and the Ethiopian Eastern Highlands. Because of a territorial dispute with Ethiopia over the Ogaden Highlands, part of Somalia's eastern border with Ethiopia is shown on some maps as provisional.
21. False:  
Dadaab is the world's largest refugee camp, hosting almost 350,000 refugees in Kenya. In 2016, Kenya announced it would close the Dadaab camp and repatriate all Somali refugees, claiming that the camp had become a haven for terrorists. Somalis compose just over 70% of the refugee population in Kenya.
22. True:  
Somalia has a maritime border dispute with Kenya over a 100,000 square km (38,600 sq mi) area potentially rich in oil and gas in the Indian Ocean. When Kenya marked the disputed territory for licensing, Somalia took the case to the International Court of Justice.
23. False:  
Al-Shabaab, (the Youth) is a Somalia-based terror group that seeks to overthrow the Somali government and impose a fundamentalist Islamic state throughout the Horn of Africa. The group is designated as a global terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department.
24. False:  
Eritrea and Somalia reestablished diplomatic ties in 2018, after nearly 15 years of animosity.
25. True:  
The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council with the approval of the United Nations in January 2007. Initially, AMISOM was headed by the AU countries most threatened by Somalia's instability—Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopia. About 20,000 AMISOM troops will remain in Somalia by February 2020.