

**Hettyey András**

**Living with a Failed State: Somalia and  
the States of the East African Regional  
Security Complex 2009-2011**

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the East African Regional Security Complex 2009-2011**

**Doktorvater: Prof. Dr. Kiss J. László**

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**Map 1: Somalia and its neighbors**

(Source: ESRI)

Somalia is a unique place, as it provides the researcher with plenty of material to study. While it has brought terrible suffering and unspeakable sorrow to its inhabitants, the on-and-off civil war that has raged in the country since 1991 presents also a rare opportunity to the interested: here, after all, is a country which has had no functioning government, army, police force, tax collection, football league or national broadcaster for twenty years. What are the reasons for this course of history? How do the Somalis cope with the failure of their state? What can policymakers do to help fix the situation and prevent other countries from taking the same route to state failure? Questions over questions, which all warrant further research.

This paper only attempts to examine a little part of the huge “Somalia picture”, namely the effects of state failure on its region. No conflict occurs in an empty space. External actors<sup>1</sup> are invariably affected by any given conflict in their neighborhood, be it through refugee flows, disruption of economic networks and activity, arms trade or piracy. The external actors in the Somali conflict are, however, by no means only passive players. They try to minimize the negative effects coming out from Somalia, while at the same time actively influencing the situation inside the country according to their interests. It is this interaction between the states of the region and Somalia which we will try to analyze in this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> We mostly focus on states, though there are of course other external actors, like international organizations, rebel groups, multinational corporations and so on.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. The object of investigation and key questions

The current paper is a case study. It examines the relationship between a failed state (Somalia<sup>2</sup>) and its surrounding region (consisting of the states Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda) since early 2009. The starting points of the paper are the following questions: what is it like to live in close proximity to a failed state? How does a failed state like Somalia affect its surrounding region? It is fair to argue, that any failed state produces various effects (refugees, instability, disruption of economic networks etc.) which greatly influence the surrounding states. What are these effects, and are they negative (as one would assume) or, at least partly, positive for the surrounding states? Further, how does a given state respond to these effects? What is its strategy to minimize the threats and maximize the potential benefits? And finally: how do the states of the region try to influence the security and political situation in Somalia? In short, we are looking at the *interaction* between a failed state and its surrounding region over a given period of time.

## 1.2. Hypothesis

In the last decade, it has become commonplace to regard failed states as presenting one of the gravest dangers to world security [Patrick 2011: 3]. Conventional wisdom and common sense suggest, that it is highly disadvantageous for any state to live adjacent to, or in the neighborhood of, a failed state. While the negative effects of state failure are

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<sup>2</sup> Under the term „Somalia”, we understand in this paper only the south-central part of the former Somalia, without Somaliland and Puntland. Somaliland declared itself independent in 1991, and is a de facto sovereign state. The various transitional governments of Somalia have had no influence or leverage over Somaliland ever since. Somaliland managed to save itself from the lawlessness and fighting engulfing much of south-central Somalia and has a functioning, if modestly equipped, state structure, with elections taking place. Puntland seceded from Somalia in 1998 and declared itself autonomous. Unlike Somaliland, it is not trying to obtain international recognition as a separate nation, but its politics and security situation is likewise mostly detached from Somalia. Despite occasional violence, Puntland is much more peaceful than the mother country, and it has a rudimentary state structure, with an own president, government and parliament.

Because (1) the security dynamics in these two entities are quite different from Somalia (al-Shabaab, for example, has almost no presence in either Somaliland or Puntland), and (2) the two quasi-states have only limited interaction with the surrounding states, we do not include them in the present paper.

mostly borne by the local population, failed states supposedly also produce a variety of factors which might threaten neighboring states.

For starters, failed states might negatively affect the stability and security of the surrounding countries in the forms of refugee flows, cross-border clashes, or large-scale raids. As Liana Sun Wyler points out: “Instability has a tendency to spread beyond a weak state’s political borders, through overwhelming refugee flows, increased arms smuggling, breakdowns in regional trade, and many other ways.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, failed states might export home-grown terrorism to neighboring countries and might facilitate the activity of transnational crime. Whole regions can thus be contaminated by the failure of a state.

There are several examples for such a development. The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone are an obvious case in point. In the 1990s rebels, weapons and money from conflict diamonds from Liberia poured across the border to neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire [Patrick 2011: 43-44]. In Sierra Leone, a long civil war broke out, leaving 50,000 dead, while the other two countries were also seriously destabilized (which, in the case of Cote d’Ivoire, led to yet another civil war). A similar development happened in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, where the genocide in Rwanda destabilized the adjacent countries, leading to the two Congo wars which left approximately 3 million dead. These examples clearly show how state failure in one country can lead to the conflagration of the neighboring countries, if not the whole region. Therefore, *we postulate that living in the neighborhood of a failed state (in our case Somalia) is highly disadvantageous in terms of security and stability for the surrounding countries (in our case Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda).*

Apart from matters of security and stability, failed states cause problems for neighboring countries in other ways as well. On the economic front, studies suggest that being „merely adjacent to what the World Bank calls a Low-Income Country Under Stress (LICUS) reduces a country’s annual growth by an average of 1.6 percent.”<sup>4</sup> Other negative economic factors, as scholar Daniel Lambach points out, might include the flight of investors, rising transaction and infrastructure costs, tourists who stay away

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<sup>3</sup> Wyler 2008: 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick 2011: 44.



and increased military expenditure to avert the threats emanating from the failed state.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, neighboring but stable states might be utilized by warlords and shadowy entrepreneurs to import military equipment, export conflict goods and conduct financial transactions. Living with Somalia, we therefore postulate, adversely affects the economies of the neighboring states. The size and scale of the negative effects may of course vary from state to state. It seems obvious, for example, that states adjacent to Somalia suffer more in economic terms than states further away. Moreover, there also might be some positive effects emanating from Somalia: since 1991, many Somali businessmen have relocated to Nairobi, for example [Abdulsamed 2010: 3]. But *we nevertheless presume that the economic costs for the states of the region caused by the state failure in Somalia hugely outweigh the benefits.*

Overall, therefore, it seems that living in the neighborhood of a failed state inflicts huge costs and offers few benefits for the surrounding states. If this analysis is right, this would suggest that it is of paramount importance for the states of the region to pacify their failed neighbor as soon as possible, in order to reduce the threats emanating from it. While it is clear that the goal of „bringing peace” to Somalia is distant and beyond the capabilities of a single state, it seems plausible that Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya would work towards a lasting settlement in Somalia. *We therefore suppose that the four analyzed states are all interested in contributing to stabilize the situation in Somalia.*

But there is another side to the equation. The surrounding states are by no means only passive players. Theory suggests that countries neighboring a failed state react to threats as any other normal country would reasonably do: they try to minimize the mentioned negative effects while trying - to a varying degree - to influence the situation inside the country to their own advantage (Lambach calls this phenomenon „outside-in regionalization”, see later). *This „influencing” is, we postulate, driven by the interests of the surrounding states.*

While conceding that living with a failed state poses grave threats for the neighboring states, we also presume that they have learned how to handle the problems emanating from Somalia to their own best advantage. After all, they have had twenty years to learn

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<sup>5</sup> Lambach 2007: 42.

to live side by side with Somalia. Assuming this, *we postulate that the states of the region have found a reasonable modus vivendi with Somalia, one in which they astutively minimize the threats and problems coming from Somalia while working to reap all the potential benefits.*

### **1.3. Methodology**

The present paper is a work of almost four years of constant research. Broadly speaking, during these years we have collected our information from five different sources. The first were press reports from a wide range of Somali, regional and international papers, news portals, agencies and blogs. These press reports were complemented by the high-quality reporting of two of the most important sources for Africa: Africa Confidential and Africa Research Bulletin. All these documents were compiled and analyzed on a weekly basis to gather the relevant informations about the relationship of Somalia and the surrounding states. All in all, we have compiled a database consisting of more than 3,000 articles ranging from early 2008 until May 2011.

The second source of information were papers, reports and briefings from a wide range of think-tanks and NGOs. These include, just to name a few, the International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, papers from Chatham House, the Council on Foreign Relations, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, the South African Institute for Security Studies and several others. These sources of information were complemented by articles in peer-reviewed journals, such as Foreign Affairs, Current History, African Affairs and the like.

The third source of information were official documents from international organizations and national governments. The most important of these was the set of reports written by the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia since 2003. These twelve reports formed the backbone of this paper. They were complemented by other UN documents (such as the reports of the Secretary General on Somalia), and by documents of the European Union, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Among the governmental sources, the documents of the US State Department proved to be highly valuable, especially the Country Reports on Terrorism.

The fourth source of information were monographs and edited volumes on Somalia in particular, and East Africa in general. Given that the events analyzed in this paper are relatively recent, these sources served as a background for this paper, rather than a prime source of up-to-date information. Still, several authors were crucial for our understanding of the Somali and East African issues, chief among them I.M.Lewis, Kenneth Menkhaus, Gérard Prunier, Volker Matthies, Peter D. Little, Richard Reid, Dan Connell, Sally Healy, Michael A. Weinstein, Abdi Ismail Samatar, Gaim Kibreab, Harold G. Marcus, Michela Wrong and Christopher Clapham, just to name a few.

Finally, the fifth source of information were more than 30 background interviews with middle- and high-ranking diplomats, journalists, conflict analysts and scholars conducted between June 2010-January 2011. These interviews were partly personal (conducted during a six-week research trip to East Africa in Kampala, Nairobi and Mombasa) and partly electronical, via email or Skype. All interviews were conducted on a confidential basis, so that the names of the interview partners will not be given in this paper, only their views reflected.

After all the relevant and acquirable informations were gathered, we arranged them chronologically on a state-by-state basis. The resulting data sets comprised around 1,000 pages in total. After this, we filtered the data sets for the most relevant pieces of information and summed them up in the states chapter (see Chapter 4). In order to confront the reader with a paper that is manageable in length, we obviously had to select very strictly. However, we believe that the most relevant informations we have gathered over the years are present in this paper.

## **1.4. Time-span**

A final important question had to be decided before embarking on the journey of writing this paper, namely the time-span of the work. The finishing point was easy to determine: we stopped monitoring the Somali, regional and international press as well as the scientific literature on 30 April 2011, just when we began to work on this paper. But the more difficult question was: from which starting date should we *begin* to analyze the relationship between Somalia and the surrounding states?

There were several potential answers. One would have been to start from 1991, when Siad Barre fled the country, and Somalia slipped into a civil war among the different rebel factions and warlords. Another starting point could have been 1995, when the last UN troops left the country. This has been the last large-scale, officially sanctioned foreign intervention in Somalia. And one could have started from 2004, when the internationally recognized (and initially promising) first Transitional Federal Government (“TFG 1.0” in the parlance of this paper) was formed.

We, however, decided to set the starting point to January 2009. This is a month in which two important developments took place. In this month, Ethiopia withdrew its troops from Mogadishu, after having occupied Somalia for two years. At the same time, the removal of Ethiopian troops “provided enhanced opportunities for negotiation with one faction of the Islamist opposition...The merger of the ARS-Djibouti with the all-but-defunct TFG on January 26, 2009, was hailed by the UN as the creation of a national unity government and crowds of Somalis demonstrated joyfully in the streets of Mogadishu.”<sup>6</sup> This “national unity government” was the new and internationally recognized “TFG 2.0”, with President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed at its helm, who, as of summer 2011, is still in charge. This new government looked initially promising, because, for the first time, it also included moderate Islamists. This has been a great improvement over the previous TFG 1.0, which was composed largely of Ethiopian-friendly politicians, and was discredited and basically defunct. Nationally and internationally, in January 2009 there was great hope that the TFG 2.0 could be more successful than its predecessor. The installment of the new government represented therefore a new phase in Somali politics.

From our point of view, however, the removal of the Ethiopian troops was the more important development, because it could be presumed that the Ethiopian withdrawal would lead to a serious recalibration of the foreign policy of the states in the region. To start with, the removal of its troops was in itself a serious Ethiopian policy change. Since January 2009, there are no Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu, greatly changing the security landscape in the country. This also means that Ethiopia has changed its foreign

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<sup>6</sup> Bruton 2010: 9-10.

policy-tools to achieve its goals in Somalia: instead of complete occupation, it relies on a combination of strong diplomatic support and cross-border raids, as we will see.

It could be also expected, that with the Ethiopian army out of Somalia, Eritrea would decrease its support for al-Shabaab, all the more so, because with the new President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, Eritrea had a former close ally in the most important position. The withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops also represented a great change for Uganda in as far as the AMISOM (which was composed mainly of Ugandan soldiers) had lost a strong ally in its constant fight against the rebels. In short, the events of January 2009 represented both on the national and the regional level a big break.

Another important factor in determining the starting date of this paper was the fact that we began to compile our database of relevant press articles in early 2008, as part of our MA thesis, which was the origin of the present paper. We believe that without the thorough-going analysis of the press it is impossible to sketch the most important developments in the region, simply because there is not enough information around. This was also an important reason why we decided to begin our examination in early 2009.

## **1.5. The structure**

The structure of this paper is as follows: after this introduction, we give a short overview in Chapter 2 of the theories underpinning this paper. As the title of this paper “Living with a Failed State: Somalia and the States of the East African Regional Security Complex 2009-2011” implies, we first of all have to work out what the concepts of “failed state” and “region” mean. To do this, we fall back on seminal works of Ulrich Schneckener and Stewart Patrick to present the theory of “failed states”, and we present our understanding of the concept of “region” with the help of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. Then, to show how state failure affects its region and vice versa, we fall back upon the model of Daniel Lambach, who offers an analytical framework to do this.

In Chapter 3, we give a short overview of the political and security developments in Somalia since 1991. The aim of this chapter is not to present the history of the country

in full detail.<sup>7</sup> Rather, we will try to sketch the most important internal developments while also presenting how the states of the region interacted with Somalia during these years. In order to keep this chapter short, we will mostly focus on the years since 2004, when the first Transitional Federal Government was formed. We strongly believe that it is impossible to analyze the interaction between Somalia and the region without a basic knowledge of the internal developments there. On the other side, the reader does not have to be familiar with every minor twist and turn of Somalia's history in order to understand this paper.

Chapter 4 and 5 comprise the most important findings of the paper. In Chapter 4, we present the interaction between Somalia and the surrounding states one by one. This chapter is, by and large, not analytical; it only aims to describe the most important issues affecting the relationship between Somalia and the given state. We first examine the inside-out factors<sup>8</sup> and then the outside-in factors state after state and in a chronological order (on what "inside-out" and "outside-in" factor means see Chapter 2). The only exception will be Uganda, where we first discuss the outside-in factors. While we concentrate on the years since 2009, where necessary we will also describe the most important developments in the years prior to 2009.

Chapter 5, in turn, aims to be analytical. On the basis of the findings of Chapter 4, we try to answer the questions this paper poses: how does a failed state like Somalia affect its surrounding region? What are these effects, and are they negative or, at least partly, positive for the surrounding states? How does a given state respond to these effects? What is its strategy to minimize the threats and maximize the potential benefits? Finally, in Chapter 6, we present a short overview of the main findings of the paper.

## **1.6. Shortcomings of the paper**

Lastly, we have to honestly inform the reader of the inherent shortcomings of this paper. Studying Africa from afar is never easy. The quality of the press, albeit with some exceptions, is usually lower than in Europe. Reporting is often politically biased. Self-censorship is common, especially in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where it is difficult to speak

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<sup>7</sup> For this, see for example: Lewis 2002 or the various Crisis Group reports.

<sup>8</sup> The terms „factors“ and „effects“ will be used interchangeably.

about free press at all. Monographs or scientific articles on important issues are lacking (see next chapter).

All this is, understandably, even more true in Somalia. The informations coming out of the country are hard to verify. There are few reliable newspapers. It is also very difficult to go into the country. Therefore, as one interviewed expert said, everybody speaking about Somali affairs has basically the same sets information, they are just interpreting it differently.<sup>9</sup> The problem of reliable sources is compounded by the fact that this paper deals with relatively recent developments. Because of the recentness of the events, it is often quite difficult to evaluate the importance of certain events. Maybe twenty years from now, with the benefit of hindsight, the era of the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Governments will be seen only a fleeting episode in Somali history and other developments will be given much bigger importance. But this is a situation all scholars have to face if they are analyzing recent events.

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<sup>9</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Literary review and the relevance of the paper

As Stefan Wolff has pointed out, the regional dimension of state failure is an understudied subject. While the two underlying concepts - “failed state” and “region” - have been thoroughly analyzed, the two topics “remained largely unconnected.”<sup>10</sup> Daniel Lambach echoes the same view: “In recent years, attention has been focused on the global consequences of state failure. Undoubtedly, failed states are highly globalized through economic and social ties to diasporas, connections to the small arms trade and, where interventions have been undertaken, through a plethora of international actors (IOs, NGOs, other state actors). Comparatively less attention has been paid to their regional impact, which in most cases arguably has much greater repercussions.”<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, there is considerable literature about the history of Somalia since its independence (see, for example, Samatar 1989, Lewis 1993, Bakonyi 2001, Lewis 2002), and about the civil war and peace efforts since 1991 (see, for example, Sahnoun 1994, Lewis 2002, Menkhaus 2007a and 2007b, the various Crisis Group reports, etc.). But the regional dimension of the Somali civil war is, by and large, understudied. There are, for example, woefully few books and articles about the foreign policy of particular African states (a noteworthy exception is Wright 1999), not to mention about the *Somali policy* of individual African states. All this warrants a close look on how the states of the East African regional security complex deal with the Somali civil war.

Another factor lends a huge importance to the study of failed states and their surrounding regions. In recent years, particularly since 09/11, the attention of policymakers all around the world has shifted to the ungoverned spaces of the world like Afghanistan, where the al-Qaeda terrorists had organized their attack on America. In the following years, as Stewart Patrick has recently pointed out failed states were described in several strategy papers as one gravest threat facing international security. President George W. Bush “captured this new view in his National Security Strategy of 2002, declaring: ‘America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by

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<sup>10</sup> Wolff s.a.: 1.

<sup>11</sup> Lambach 2007: 37.



failing ones.’ In the words of Richard Haas, the State Department’s director of policy planning, ‘The attacks of September 11 2001, reminded us that weak states can threaten our security as much as strong ones, by providing breeding grounds for extremism and havens for criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists’”<sup>12</sup>

This point of view was also echoed across the Atlantic. The European Security Strategy of 2003 identified state failure as an alarming phenomenon and declared that it is one of the main threats to the European Union. Prime Minister Tony Blair in Great Britain pioneered a government-wide strategy to prevent states from failing. His successor, David Cameron “has since launched a new UK National Security Strategy that prioritizes attention and resources to “fragile, failing and failed states” around the world. Canada, Australia and others have issued similar policy statements.”<sup>13</sup>

The studying and understanding of failed states is therefore not only of scholarly interest, but has wide ranging implications for our security as well. If we could understand the interactions between a failed state and its neighbors, we would gain important information, through which we could tackle the whole problem of failed states much better. It seems, for example, quite logical, that if surrounding states are suffering from a failed neighbor, they will be willing partners for Western states in pacifying and stabilizing it. On the other hand, if surrounding states benefit from the existence of a failed neighbor, they are probably interested in keeping it failed. The aim of this paper is therefore crucially important: we have to analyze and understand the interaction between the neighboring states and Somalia if we want the country to leave the group of failed states. Without the support of the region, however, it will be extremely difficult to make any real progress. In order to understand the position and interests of these states, we have to take a thorough look at them. This is the goal of this paper.

## **2.2. The theory of “failed states”**

Somalia is a failed state *par excellence*. Few things are as clear-cut and unequivocal in the field of security studies as this statement. However, in order to understand the

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<sup>12</sup> Patrick 2011: 4.

<sup>13</sup> Patrick 2011: 5.

threats and challenges emanating from a failed state to its region, we have to know what being a failed state means.

The concept of “failed state” has a huge literature, and it is not the aim of the current paper to present the evolution and the wherewithal of the concept in detail (for this, see Debiel 2002, Fukuyama 2004, Schneckener 2004, Patrick 2011 among others, and for excellent case studies Marton 2006). Still, we would like to give a short overview based on the work of two scholars.<sup>14</sup> Doing this, one has to bear in mind, that there is no clear and widely accepted definition of what a failed state is. Most researchers therefore analyze countries on the basis of their relative institutional strengths to determine which country is failed and which country is not. To do this, we have to know which functions a state is required to fulfill.

Statehood in the twenty-first century implies that every state has an obligation to provide its citizens with four main categories of political goods. The first, and perhaps the most important function is to “*ensure basic social order and protect inhabitants from the threat of violence from internal and external forces...*Increasingly, and particularly within democratic nations, the expectation is that the provision of security will be applied equally to all citizens and that the use of force will be under the ultimate control of accountable political authorities.”<sup>15</sup> Schneckener calls this ‘Sicherheitsfunktion’, and defines it as follows: “Eine elementare Funktion des Staates ist die Gewährleistung von Sicherheit nach Innen und Außen, insbesondere von physischer Sicherheit für die Bürger. Kern dieser Funktion ist daher die Kontrolle eines Territoriums mittels des staatlichen Gewaltmonopols, das sich in der Durchsetzung einer staatlichen Verwaltung zur Kontrolle von Ressourcen und dem Vorhandensein einer staatlichen Armee bzw. Polizei zur Befriedung lokaler Konflikte und Entwaffnung privater Gewaltakteure ausdrückt.”<sup>16</sup>

The second function of the state, according to Patrick, is to *provide “legitimate, representative and accountable governance under the rule of law.”*<sup>17</sup> The state should

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<sup>14</sup> The following section draws heavily on Patrick 2011: 24-26. and Schneckener 2004: 12-14.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick 2011: 24-25.

<sup>16</sup> Schneckener 2004: 13.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick 2011: 25.

have a recognized leader, protect fundamental rights and govern properly. Schneckener describes this as ‘Legitimitäts- und Rechtsstaatsfunktion’ and writes: “Dieser Bereich umfasst Formen der politischen Partizipation und der Entscheidungsprozeduren (Input-Legitimität), die Stabilität politischer Institutionen sowie der Qualität des Rechtsstaats, des Justizwesens und der öffentlichen Verwaltung.”<sup>18</sup>

The third function, according to Patrick, is for the state to *provide basic social welfare* for its citizens, “including through delivery of services like water and sanitation and investments in health and education.”<sup>19</sup> Schneckener calls this ‘Wohlfahrtsfunktion’, and writes that in the centre of this function “stehen Staatliche Dienst- und Transferleistungen sowie Mechanismen der Verteilung wirtschaftlicher Ressourcen – beides in der Regel finanziert durch Staatseinnahmen (Zölle, Steuern, Gebühren und Abgaben).”<sup>20</sup>

Patrick also adds a fourth function, namely the function to “*create a legal and regulatory framework conducive to economic growth and development.*”<sup>21</sup> The state should provide sound management of public finances and assets enforce property rights and regulate the market activity efficiently.

Schneckener then goes on to give a typology of states which are consolidated, weak, failing or failed.<sup>22</sup> The type of each state depends on how much of the mentioned functions it is able to fulfill. Predictably, Somalia is in the fourth category, which includes states which are unable to fulfill any of the functions in any way: “Bei diesem Typ ist keiner der drei Funktionen mehr in nennenswerter Weise vorhanden, so daß man von einem völligen Zusammenbruch oder Kollaps von Staatlichkeit sprechen kann.”<sup>23</sup> States that can not fulfill any of the three tasks are, in the view of Schneckener, failed states.

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<sup>18</sup> Schneckener 2004: 13.

<sup>19</sup> Patrick 2011: 25.

<sup>20</sup> Schneckener 2004: 13.

<sup>21</sup> Patrick 2011: 25.

<sup>22</sup> Schneckener 2004: 14-17.

<sup>23</sup> Schneckener 2004: 16.

Stewart Patrick uses a somewhat similar approach to typologize and determine failed states. To measure state weakness, he develops a set of twenty indicators which serve as proxies for the four core aspects of state performance.<sup>24</sup> The results are then compiled to an “Index of State Weakness in the Developing World”, where 141 states are listed according to their overall score. Somalia, predictably, occupies the first place.

When states cease to perform their fundamental functions, their population pays a heavy price. “States with weak governance are disproportionately susceptible to humanitarian catastrophes, both man-made and natural” – writes Patrick. Other researchers agree: according to a study by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, fragile states are fifteen times more prone to civil war than OECD countries.<sup>25</sup> A failed state, however, does not only fail its own citizens. It also fails to be good neighbor, and here is where the regional effects of state failure come to the fore. However, in order to be able to talk about the regional implications of state failure, we have to determine what “region” means, and then, in the next step, to establish which states form the so-called “regional security complex” around Somalia.

### **2.3. The theory of “regional security complex”**

The other theory of international security which this paper draws heavily on (apart from the concept of state failure) is the regional security complex theory of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver as presented in their seminal work, *Regions and Powers*.<sup>26</sup> This theory will form the background for our understanding of the East African region which, in our view, comprises Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya (see below).

At the heart of the regional security complex theory lies the assumption, that “since decolonization, the regional level of security has become both more autonomous and more prominent in international politics, and that the ending of the Cold War accelerated this process.”<sup>27</sup> In this theory, so-called regional security complexes are the main building blocs. Drawing on neo-classical realism and globalism, Buzan and Wæver develop a three-tiered scheme of the international security structure in the post-

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<sup>24</sup> Patrick 2011: 28-32.

<sup>25</sup> Collier-Hoeffler 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003. The following short summary of their book draws on Wolff s.a.

<sup>27</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 3.

Cold War world with one superpower (USA) and four great powers (EU, Japan, China and Russia) acting at the system level and regional powers at the regional level.

Buzan and Wæver consider the regional level as the most appropriate level on which to analyze security. “Normally, two too extreme levels dominate security analysis: national and global. National security - e.g., the security of France – is not in itself a meaningful level of analysis. Because security dynamics are inherently relational, no nation’s security is self-contained.”<sup>28</sup> The vehicle the authors develop to analyze security on a regional level is the *regional security complex*. A regional security complex is “defined by durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of sub-global, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence.”<sup>29</sup> In other words, a regional security complex is “a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.”<sup>30</sup> In this theory, great importance is attached to geographic proximity, because many threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones. The general rule is that adjacency increases security interaction.

On the practical level, Buzan and Wæver establish regional security complexes (RSC) all around the world, including the Horn of Africa. The members of this particular security complex are, in their view, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia.<sup>31</sup> The authors, however, opine, that this particular RSC is only a *proto-complex*, meaning, that “there is sufficient manifest security inter-dependence to delineate a region and differentiate it from its neighbours, but the regional security dynamics are still too thin and weak to think of the region as a fully fledged RSC.”<sup>32</sup>

In the view of the authors, two security dynamics shape this RSC: the Ethiopia-Sudan, and the Ethiopia-Somalia dynamics. The reason for seeing this situation as a proto-complex (and not as a fully fledged RSC) is the fact, that these two dynamics are not connected. There is little evidence that the Sudanese and the Somali sides of the equation had direct or indirect contact throughout the years. “This therefore appeared to

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<sup>28</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 43.

<sup>29</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 45.

<sup>30</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 491.

<sup>31</sup> See map: Buzan- Wæver 2003: 231.

<sup>32</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 491.

be a chain of localisms without any clearly defined regional pattern of security interdependence.”<sup>33</sup>

Be that as it may, for us it is of great importance to point out, that, although being only a proto-complex, the states of the East African region still very much constitute a single security complex: the security of the states is interdependent and closely bound together. If the security situation deteriorates in one of them, all the others feel the repercussions in one way or another. It seems therefore very much appropriate, to analyze the effects of a failed state on a regional level.

## **2.4. Modification of the East African security complex**

While we completely agree with the reasoning of Buzan and Wæver considering the importance of the regional level, in light of recent developments we had to modify the composition of the East African RSC. In this paper, we assume that the East African regional security complex consists of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti (in accordance with Buzan and Wæver), but, in our view, Sudan is *currently* not a member of this RSC. (In this theory each state can only belong to one RSC). Moreover, we consider that Kenya is very much a part of the East African RSC and that Uganda is an *insulator* between the East African RSC and the Central African RSC. (Insulator, in the definition of the authors, is “a state or mini-complex standing between regional security complexes and defining a location where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back”).<sup>34</sup>

Our re-arrangement of the East African RSC warrants some explanation. First, even Buzan and Wæver admit, that it is extremely difficult to draw a boundary in the region. “Although the border between Ethiopia and Kenya might count as a place where security dynamics stand back to back, Somalia has had territorial disputes with Kenya, and the Sudanese civil war spills over the boundaries with Uganda and DR Congo, pulling the region into Central Africa.”<sup>35</sup> We agree with that and emphasize that our own re-arrangement of the RSC does not claim to be the ultimate solution to the

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<sup>33</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 242.

<sup>34</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 490.

<sup>35</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 243.

question which states belong to the East African conflict arena. We only say that the civil war in Somalia affects the security and economy of these states, namely Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda, in the strongest way. No other states are as much affected by, and as active in Somalia as these four. This is of course not to say that other states are not affected by the civil war in Somalia (for example Yemen). We only say that the level of effects emanating from Somalia is much lower in these other states.

Sudan, for one, is barely affected by the developments in Somalia, and, in turn, barely tries to influence the situation in Somalia. In our view, Sudan is currently too much focused on its separation with South Sudan to be part of the East African RSC. In the years since 2009, it has barely shown any activity in relation to Somalia, and even before that it was not a prime player there (although it has modestly supported the Transitional National Government for example).<sup>36</sup> Experts attribute this decreasing activity in East Africa to the fact, that Khartoum is currently much more preoccupied with its domestic affairs.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Khartoum has in any case long ceased to support Ethiopian rebels and has recently close contacts to Addis Ababa.<sup>38</sup> In other words, Sudan's links to the East African RSC are, in our view, *currently* greatly weakened.

Thirdly, the reason for Kenya's inclusion in the East African RSC is warranted by the fact, that its security situation is very much influenced by the situation in Somalia. As we will see, Kenya is affected in several ways by the civil war in Somalia. This includes effects such as a large number of Somali refugees poring over to Kenya, the activity of terrorist groups in the country and huge economic effects. Moreover, due to the large number of ethnic Somalis living in the country and the sizeable Somali diaspora in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya is in many ways linked to Somalia. Security-wise, Kenya is much more connected to and influenced by Somalia than by its other neighbors, largely peaceful Tanzania and Uganda.

We have also included Uganda in the present paper, largely because its participation in the AMISOM mission. Because Uganda engages itself so strongly in Somalia, its

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<sup>36</sup> United Nations 2003a: 8.

<sup>37</sup> Personal interview, Budapest, December 2010.

<sup>38</sup> See for example: Ethiopian News Agency: "Meles hails Ethio-Sudan cooperation", 21 April 2009, [http://www.kilil5.com/news/20841\\_meles-hails-ethio-sudan-cooperat](http://www.kilil5.com/news/20841_meles-hails-ethio-sudan-cooperat)



inclusion was more than warranted, despite its geographical distance to the country. That the security of Uganda is strongly linked to the situation in Somalia was tragically illustrated by the 11 July 2010 attacks, when al-Shabaab suicide bombers killed more than 70 people. As al-Shabaab emphasized after the bombing, the attack was made because Uganda took part in the AMISOM mission and helped to stabilize the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.<sup>39</sup>

We, however, do not believe that Uganda is part of the East African RSC. Rather, it is a classic insulator state, standing between several security complexes. This view is echoed by Buzan and Wæver: “The problem of local security dynamics blurring one into another in a more or less seamless web is even bigger in Eastern and Central Africa. Here, until the late 1990s, it was virtually impossible to identify even pre-RSCs. Uganda illustrates the difficulty, seeming to be a kind of regional hub, yet without providing much connection between the different security dynamics in which it was engaged. Uganda plays into the Horn because of its interaction with Sudan, into Central Africa because of its interactions with Rwanda and DR Congo, and into Eastern Africa because of its interactions with Kenya and Tanzania.”<sup>40</sup>

Lastly, while we regard Djibouti as part of the East African RSC, we did not include its analysis in this paper. This was not an easy decision. However, the reasons we excluded Djibouti were, in our view, grave enough to warrant this judgment. The most important reason for excluding the country is its limited foreign-policy capacity. (This is not to say that it does not have any!) Its land area is smaller than Lake Eire or Sicily, its entire population is half of Hamburg’s and its GDP (on purchasing power parity) is one-tenth of Mozambique’s. All this means that the country has had only limited means to engage itself in Somalia. Djibouti has always been a strong supporter of the Transitional Federal Government and critical of al-Shabaab, but its support for the TFG was mostly diplomatic. (For example, it hosted the conference which led to the formation of the TFG 2.0 in January 2009). There is no evidence that Djibouti has sent arms, ammunition or money to Somalia. Although it was mooted, the country does not take

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<sup>39</sup> Reuters: „Uganda bombs kill 74, Islamists claim attack”, 12 July 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE66A2ED20100712>

<sup>40</sup> Buzan- Wæver 2003: 233.



part in the AMISOM mission. In short, Djibouti is not active in Somalia. Its most important contribution is only passive: it provides France and the USA with military bases, from which to operate in the region. France had even used its base to train TFG troops, presumably with the consent of Djibouti. But, all in all, the little country is well aware of its precarious location in one of the world's most dangerous neighborhoods and is therefore extremely cautious in criticizing anybody.<sup>41</sup>

If Djibouti is not really active in Somalia, it is also less affected by it than its neighbors. Djibouti has no common border with Somalia (only with Somaliland), and, unlike Kenya or Ethiopia, there is only a limited number of Somali refugees in the country (14,000 as of January 2011).<sup>42</sup> Although al-Shabaab has occasionally threatened the country, this was mostly because of the mooted Djiboutian participation in AMISOM which never materialized.<sup>43</sup> There has been no Somalia-linked terrorism activity in the country, and its economy does not seem to suffer much from the failure of the Somali state.<sup>44</sup> Its gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by a solid 5-6% during 2008-2010, much faster than in the years 2001-2007.<sup>45</sup> In short, because of its limited foreign-policy capacity, its cautiousness and its passivity, we decided the interaction between Somalia and Djibouti does not warrant an own chapter.

## **2.5. State failure in a regional context**

Having determined what the concept of “failed state” and the “regional security complex theory” comprises, we are able to tell which countries in the region Somalia affects by being failed. We should now turn to the question of *how* state failure affects its surrounding states. To answer this rather rarely studied question, we turn to the research of Daniel Lambach, who wrote extensively about the regional implications of state failure.

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<sup>41</sup> The Economist: „St Tropez in the Horn?“, 19 March 2008, <http://www.economist.com/node/10881652>

<sup>42</sup> UNHCR 2011.

<sup>43</sup> See for example: Garowe Online: „Al Shabaab Warns Djibouti Not to Send Peacekeepers“, 18 September 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200909211097.html>

<sup>44</sup> Personal interview, November 2010, Nairobi.

<sup>45</sup> World Bank 2011b.

In his study *Close Encounters in the Third Dimension. The Regional Effects of State Failure* Lambach differentiates between two kinds of regional effects: structural and dynamic factors. “The first kind represents long-term social formations, attachments and networks that evolve slowly over time, whereas the second encompasses shorter-term developments that directly affect neighboring countries.”<sup>46</sup> As our paper only examines a time-span of three years, it is clear that we will focus on the dynamic factors rather than the structural factors. While not excluding them totally, we believe that it is obviously rather difficult to point down structural changes in such a short time-span. Lambach then goes on to make a typology of the factors, which can be presented in the following graphic<sup>47</sup>:

*Table 2: Typology of Factors*

Type	Structural Factors	Dynamic Factors
<b>Military</b>	Political relations between relevant actors	Crossborder incursions into neighboring states Military intervention by neighboring states
<b>Social</b>	<p>Crossborder links of solidarity or identity groups</p> <p>Refugee populations</p>	<p>Refugee flows<sup>9</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial burden</li> <li>• Social conflict</li> <li>• Ethno-political imbalances</li> <li>• Infectious diseases</li> <li>• Refugee warriors</li> <li>• Small arms proliferation</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	Networks of the shadow economy	Proliferation of weapons and military equipment Export of conflict goods Financial transactions

<sup>9</sup> Refugee flows start out as a dynamic phenomenon that poses an immense logistical and humanitarian challenge for their host country. However, once the refugees are settled in camps or settlements, they become a refugee population that represents a structural factor. Furthermore, crossborder links of solidarity or crossborder identity groups can in some cases be created through displacement and flight.

**Table 1: Lambach’s Typology of Factors**

(Source: Lambach 2007: 40.)

<sup>46</sup> Lambach 2007: 39.

<sup>47</sup> Taken from: Lambach 2007: 40.

As we can see, Lambach identifies three ways in which a failed state can influence its neighbors: military, social and economic. *Military* effects can be cross border incursions into neighboring states by the conflict parties in a given failed state (like al-Shabaab does in Northern Kenya). Or it can be military interventions by the neighboring states into the failed state (like Ethiopia did on several occasions).

On the military front, Lambach makes a further very important distinction, between *inside-out* and *outside-in* regionalization. Inside-out regionalization “comprises acts by conflict parties inside the failed state that serve to export violence to neighboring countries. Examples include constructing bases in other countries or conducting large-scale raids on other countries. These acts can be committed with or without the support, tacit or overt, of the government of the affected country or of the dominant local authorities in the areas across the border.”<sup>48</sup>

Outside-in regionalization, on the other hand, “covers all moves by outside actors to intervene in the failed state, usually by deploying military force or by supporting armed actors across the border.” In both cases, writes Lambach, regionalization can be achieved through proxy fighters instead of committing one’s own military forces, which makes the distinction between inside-out and outside-in sometimes quite difficult.

On the *social* front, the author identifies refugee flows as one of the most important factors, which also features prominently in our paper. About the refugees, Lambach writes: “Refugees impose a great financial burden on their host countries which is usually only partly alleviated by international assistance through UNHCR and other organizations. They contribute to economic and social conflicts by competing in the job market, thus lowering local wage levels. There is a possibility that refugees upset the ethnic balance within the province where they are sheltered. International and local funds necessary for the support of the refugees usually go to areas that are relatively poor and underdeveloped compared to the rest of the country, which might upset fragile political balances. Refugee flows, especially in tropical and underdeveloped regions, can also lead to a spread of infectious diseases such as Malaria and HIV.”<sup>49</sup> Moreover, it

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<sup>48</sup> Lambach 2007: 39.

<sup>49</sup> Lambach 2007: 39-40.

is very difficult to separate between civilian refugees and former fighters. Another problematic factor for the host country is the fact that the refugees provide a vast pool from which to recruit new fighters – something which al-Shabaab has reportedly tried to do in Northern Kenyan refugee camps.

On the *economic* front Lambach identifies several possible factors, including the flight of investors from countries bordering a failed state, rising transaction and infrastructure costs, tourists who stay away and increased military expenditure as countries next to an internal conflict usually spend more on the military, thus taking resources away from more productive investment [Lambach 2007: 42]. Another factor might be the shadow economy. Neighboring but relatively stable states (such as Kenya) “are utilized by war entrepreneurs and conflict parties to import small arms and military equipment, export conflict goods (e.g., drugs, timber, precious metals, diamonds) and conduct financial transactions.”<sup>50</sup> We should complement this by adding money-laundering to the list, something the warlords and pirates of Somalia and Puntland are doing in Nairobi. All in all, the economic effects of state failure are grave: by one calculation, being “merely adjacent to what the World Bank calls a Low-Income Country Under Stress (LICUS) reduces a country’s annual growth by an average of 1.6 percent.”<sup>51</sup>

Overall it is clear that neighboring states are affected in many ways by a failed state. However, as Lambach points out, the dynamics between a failed state and its surrounding states are not one-sided. It is not that just the failed state affects its neighbors, it is also the other way round. After all, in Lambach’s model there are not only inside-out, but outside-in effects as well. In other words, there is an *interaction* between a failed state and its neighboring states, in which the neighboring states are in no way only passive players. As we will see, each of the four states analyzed tries to influence the security situation in Somalia quite strongly. They also reap benefits from the situation in Somalia. Ethiopia and Uganda, for example, can show their usefulness to the USA vis-à-vis Somalia, and there are strong signs that Kenya benefits from the Somalia diaspora’s business activity in the country. Finally, Eritrea can cause headache to Ethiopia by engaging itself in Somalia. But this is to anticipate. What is important

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<sup>50</sup> Lambach 2007: 43.

<sup>51</sup> Patrick 2011: 44.

from Lambach's model, which we will use as a yardstick in the chapters analyzing each state's Somali policy, is to bear in mind that there is a two-sided, dynamic interaction between Somalia and its surrounding states.

## Chapter 3: History of Somalia<sup>52</sup>

### 3.1. Somalia before 1991

Somalia gained independence on 1 July 1960.<sup>53</sup> The country was formed by the union of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland. Right from the beginning of the independence, the country faced several problems, one of which was the fact, that the new state still left outside the fold Somali nationals living in French Somaliland (later Djibouti), in the contiguous eastern region of Ethiopia, and in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya. The “pan-Somali idea” of uniting all Somalis in a bigger Somalia was the imminent goal of the new Somali political elite and was even enshrined in the constitution. Since the neighboring states did not show any enthusiasm for the Somali cause and could not be expected to give up parts of their national territory voluntarily, this immediately led to bad relations between Somalia and its neighbors, as well as with the pan-African world, which regarded the maintenance of existing boundaries as sacrosanct [Lewis 2002: 179].

The most deep-seated animosity in the present East African regional security complex is arguably between Somalia and Ethiopia. Their animosity dates back at least to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the legendary Somali imam Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi came close to extinguishing the ancient realm of Christian Ethiopia and converting all of its subjects to Islam.<sup>54</sup> Occasional clashes between Ethiopia and the precursor sultanates of modern-day Somalia continued throughout the following centuries. During the last quarter of the 19th century, however, the Ogaden region was conquered by Menelik II of Abyssinia and Ethiopia solidified its occupation by treaties in 1897, absorbing a large number of Somalis living in the area.<sup>55</sup> The Ethiopians fortified their hold over the territory in 1948, when a commission led by representatives of the victorious allied nations granted the Ogaden to Ethiopia, a decision which was (and still is) hotly contested by Somali nationalists

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<sup>52</sup> The following chapter draws heavily on Lewis 2002.

<sup>53</sup> For a detailed pre-independence history of Somalia, see for example: Lewis 2002.

<sup>54</sup> See: Lewis 2002:18-40.

<sup>55</sup> See: Lewis 2002: pp. 40-63.

This was the situation in 1960, when Somalia came to being. Predictably, the aggressive Somali stance after independence quickly led to conflicts with Ethiopia and Kenya. In 1960-64, guerrillas supported by the Somali government battled local security forces in Kenya and Ethiopia on behalf of Somalia's territorial claims (the so-called "shifta war"). Then, in 1964, Ethiopian and Somali regular forces clashed and Ethiopian forces managed to push the Somalis from their territory, in part because of its ability to conduct air raids on Somali territory. In Kenya, the fighting ended with a ceasefire in 1967, with the Somali rebels unable to achieve their aim to secede from Kenya.

In response to the common Somali security threat, Kenya's president Jomo Kenyatta and Ethiopia's emperor Haile Selassie signed a mutual defense agreement in 1964 aimed at containing Somali aggression. The two countries renewed the pact in 1979 and again in 1989. (The close cooperation of the two countries in the Somali question is up to this day one of the few constant factors in the regions complicated foreign policy arena.)

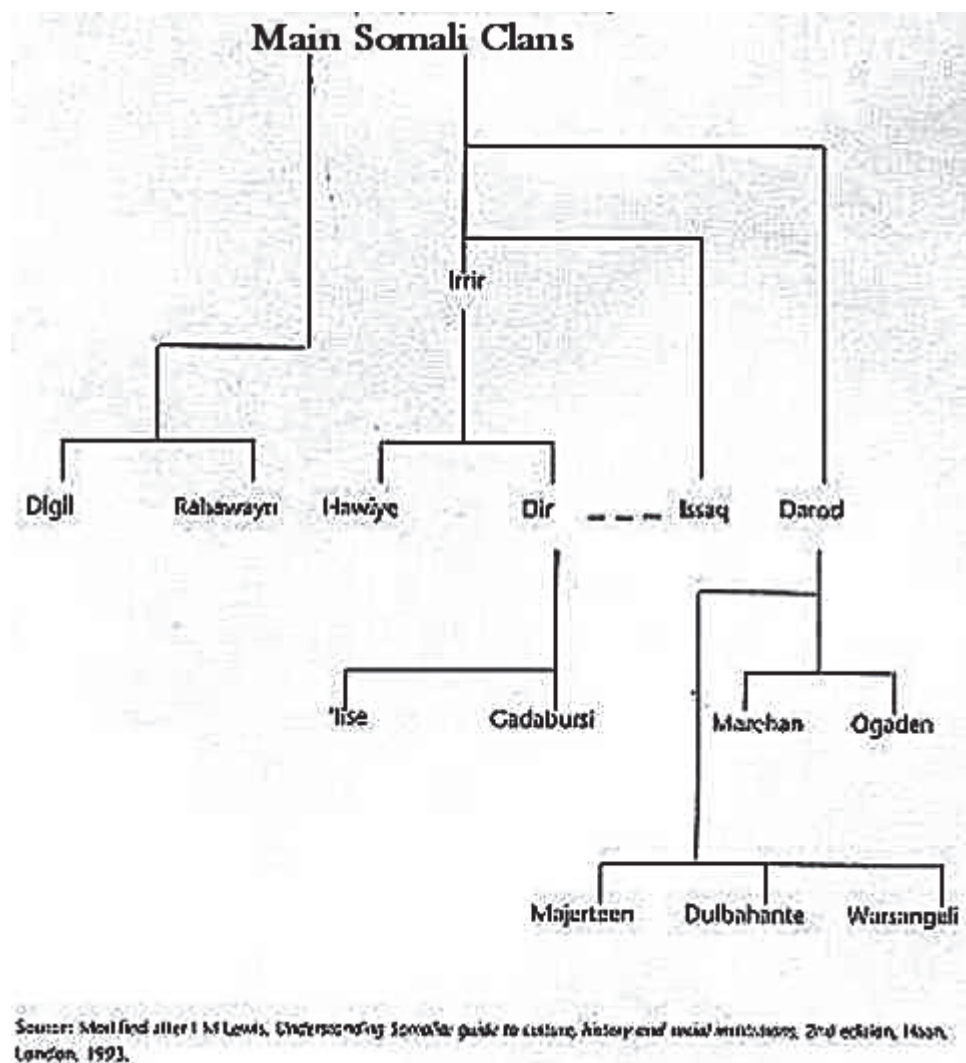
Back in Somalia, the short democratic period ended in 1969, when Somalia's then President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was shot dead by one of his own bodyguards. His assassination was quickly followed by a military coup d'état on October 21, 1969 in which the Somali Army seized power without encountering armed opposition. The putsch was spearheaded by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, who at the time commanded the army. Siad Barre established a socialist state, and sought good relations with the Eastern bloc.

In 1977, Siad Barre attacked Ethiopia to re-conquer the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. After initial Somali successes, the Ethiopian army, with help from the Soviet Union and Cuba, managed to drive back the invading troops by March 1978. For the rule of Siad Barre, the lost war signified the beginning of the end. Almost one-third of the army, three-eighths of the armored units and half of the Somali Air Force (SAF) were lost. In the wake of the war, more than 700,000 refugees from the Ogaden flooded Somalia. In 1981, a guerilla organization, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) was organized to topple Siad Barre. (The SSDF had its headquarters in Ethiopia). These problems were aggravated by serious economic mismanagement, which forced the



country to accept an IMF package, and a 1983 ban by Saudi Arabia on Somali livestock, a mainstay of Somalia's economy.

Faced with shrinking popularity and an armed and organized domestic resistance, Siad Barre unleashed a reign of terror against dissenters. In his last years, he almost exclusively relied on his Marehan sub-clan, itself a part of the much larger Darod clan. Important political and economic positions were most likely to fall to members of this sub-clan. The expansion of Marehan power was particularly strong in the army, where as much as half the senior corps belonged to Barre's clan [Lewis 2002: 256].



**Table 2: The Somali clan structure**

(Source: harowo.com)



This, in turn, further fuelled the anger of other clans, leading to the formation of other rebel groups, such as the Somali National Movement (SNM, formed in 1981 by the Issaq clan and hosted and sponsored by Ethiopia), the United Somali Congress (formed in 1988, centered on the Hawiye clan) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM, formed in 1989 by members of the Darod clan). This was helped by the fact, that Siad's policy of divide and rule had included dispensing weapons to his current allies, who sometimes turned foes later. This resulted in a great number of weapons imported from other countries to Somalia. From about 1986 onwards, the different rebel groups increasingly managed to inflict heavy losses on the regime, while Siad Barre gradually lost his control over large territories of Somalia, especially in the north. The regime reacted with brutal counter campaigns, such as the bombing of Hargeysa town, which cost an estimated 50,000 deaths, most of them from the Issaq clan. Because of the human rights record of the regime, foreign aid all but dried up by 1990 [Lewis 2002: 262].

Sensing the weakness of his rule, Siad Barre tried to mend fences with Ethiopia. After the mediation of Kenya and Djibouti, Siad Barre and Ethiopian President Mengistu finally agreed to meet in 1986. This first meeting since the Ogaden War took place in the city of Djibouti and marked the beginning of a gradual rapprochement. "Siad Barre and Mengistu held a second meeting in April 1988, at which they signed a peace agreement and formally reestablished diplomatic relations. Both leaders agreed to withdraw their troops from their mutual borders and to cease support for armed dissident groups trying to overthrow the respective governments in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu."<sup>56</sup>

The peace agreement, however, came too late for Siad Barre (and for Mengistu). The SNM rebels simply relocated to Somalia and went on to control much of the north, while the USC gained territory in Central Somalia. In January 1991, the USC troops finally chased out Siad Barre and his troops from Mogadishu. Siad Barre's 22-years old rule was over. A couple of months later, in May 1991, Mengistu was also toppled, but

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<sup>56</sup> The Library of Congress: Country Studies - Somalia, Section "Foreign Relations", <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sotoc.html>

while in Ethiopia the rebels managed to maintain the structure's of the state, Somalia sank into chaos.

### **3.2. Somalia 1991-1995**

Unlike in Ethiopia, the different rebel groups who fought against Siad Barre did not form a single umbrella organization, operating mostly on their own without coordination and trust in the others. After the toppling of Barre, the biggest groups - SSDF, USC, SPM and SNM - could not agree on the way forward. After Barre had been ousted in January 1991, Ali Mahdi Muhammad, the USC leader unilaterally declared himself Barre's successor as interim president. Predictably, the SSDF, SNM and SPM leaders refused to recognize Mahdi as president. Mahdi's action also split the USC between those who followed him ("USC/Mahdi", mainly members of the Hawiye/Abgaal clan) and those who followed Mohammed Farah Aideed (who went on to create the Somali National Alliance or "USC/SNA"). The subsequent infighting between the USC factions left 14,000 dead in Mogadishu [Lewis 2002: 264].

Witnessing the chaos which ensued in the rest of the country, and fearing the marginalization by southerners which characterized the north since independence, the former British portion of the country declared its independence as Somaliland in May 1991 at a meeting of the Somali National Movement and northern clans' elders. In May 1993, a historic grand conference was held in Borama, where the participants agreed on a transitional national charter and appointed Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Igal as president. Somaliland effectively detached itself from the south-central part of the country, and is *de facto* independent, although it has not been recognized by any foreign government as such.



**Map 2: Map of Somaliland and Puntland**

Source: npr.org

The civil war in the south between the USC factions, and between the USC and other mushrooming “rebel groups” seriously disrupted agriculture and food distribution by early 1992. The resulting famine (with about 300,000 dead) caused the United Nations Security Council in 1992 to authorize the peacekeeping operation United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) [UN 1992a]. The goal of UNISOM I was to secure effective food distribution, but only a force of 3,500 blue-helmets was authorized. Despite the UN's efforts, the fighting in Somalia continued to increase, putting the relief operations at great risk. It quickly became evident that the mission was ineffective. The Security Council then consequently passed Resolution 794, authorizing a humanitarian operation under Chapter VII of the charter [UN 1992b]. The following operation was called “Operation Restore Hope” and the UNITAF (Unified Task Force), with forces from 24 different countries and led by the United States, was established. UNITAF's most important mandate was to protect the delivery of food and other humanitarian aid. By February 1993, UNITAF included 33,000 personnel, an unprecedented number for UN operations.

After a successful couple of months with a brief lull in fighting, UNITAF, which was intended to be a transitional force, transferred power to UNOSOM II, established by Resolution 814 [UN 1993]. The major change in policy that the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II entailed was that the new mandate included the responsibility of nation-building on the multinational force. The transition from UNITAF was supposed to be facilitated by a ceasefire between the different rebel groups signed in March 1993 in Addis Ababa. On 1 May 1993, UNOSOM II finally took over from UNITAF.

UNOSOM II had a strength of 28,000 personnel, including 22,000 troops and 8,000 logistic and civilian staff. The main difficulty the mission was facing was the fact that the fighting between the Somali factions restarted in April-May 1993. On 5 June, 24 Pakistani soldiers were ambushed and killed by Aideed's troops. According to the scholar I. M. Lewis, the ensuing UN counter-attacks were profoundly counterproductive [Lewis 2002: 272]. The fighting escalated, producing hundreds of Somali casualties, without being able to locate Aideed himself. In October 1993, in the infamous Black Hawk incident, 19 American troops and more than 1,000 civilians and militia were killed in a raid on Aideed headquarters in Mogadishu. The American public was horrified by the pictures of dead marines being dragged ignominiously through the streets of Mogadishu, and vociferously clamored for an immediate withdrawal from Somalia.

On 7 October 1993 in a nationwide television address, President Clinton effectively ended the US proactive policy in Somalia and called for the withdrawal of all US forces no later than March 31, 1994. This clearly marked the beginning of the end for UNOSOM II. After yet another unsuccessful round of negotiations between the warring factions, the UN withdrew its troops from Mogadishu by March 1995. UNOSOM II lost 147 soldiers, and failed in its undertaking to disarm or capture Aideed, and made no progress in restructuring the government. After the last troops left, Somalia was left to its own devices.

### **3.3. Somalia 1995-2004**

After the UN withdrawal, events in Somalia proceeded much as before the intervention [Lewis 2002: 280]. The city of Mogadishu was the scene of yet another round of infighting, which culminated in August 1996 in the death of Hussein Farah Aideed in a battle with rival forces. In the northeast region meanwhile, a homegrown constitutional conference was held in Garowe in 1998 over a period of three months. Attended by the area's political elite, traditional elders, members of the business community, intellectuals and other civil society representatives, the autonomous Puntland State of Somalia was subsequently officially established. Puntland remained officially part of Somalia and is not trying to obtain international recognition as a separate nation. Still, it can be regarded as an entirely autonomous state.

After an Egyptian-led peace initiative in 1997 proved unsuccessful (allegedly because Ethiopian meddling), the international community in 2000 once tried again to bring peace to the country [Elmi-Barise 2006: 40]. This time, the venue was the town of Arta in Djibouti. There, a Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed, and Abdiqasim Salad Hassan was elected president. However, many Somali factions refused to attend as they could not set the terms of reconciliation, and their backer, Ethiopia, was against the TNG. These pro-Ethiopia factions formed their own pan-tribal national government movement, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC). Ethiopia essentially regarded the new government as a pawn for the regional Arab regimes and was dismayed by the fact that the most important positions went to members of the Hawiye-clan, traditionally very hostile to Ethiopia [Lewis 2002: 293].

In the subsequent years the TNG, plagued with internal problems and facing powerful enemies, proved to be utterly ineffective. Although the UN officially recognized the TNG, it yielded almost no power in Somalia, and essentially became only another warring faction in the civil war. By 2002, it became clear, that a new “solution” had to be found. This time, the venue for the new conference was Kenya, and the talks were sponsored by the sub-regional organization IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development). Although the talks initially dragged on, the whole process produced a promising outcome. “After two years of impasse, the Kenyan peace process enjoyed sudden progress in the fall of 2004. This forward movement resulted in part from a

decision by Ethiopia and Djibouti to push the process...In rapid succession, the Somali delegates produced an accord on a transitional charter for Somalia and then agreed on the selection of a transitional parliament, which in turn elected [Abdullahi] Yusuf as president. Yusuf, a former liberation front leader, militia leader, president of the autonomous region of Puntland and close client of Ethiopia, was a divisive choice. Complaints of vote-buying were later invoked by Somalis challenging the legitimacy of the government.”<sup>57</sup>

The new government, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) got off to a bad start. President Yusuf named Ali Mohamed Ghedi, another client of Ethiopia, as prime minister. The parliament, still sitting in Nairobi, became almost immediately embroiled in two divisive arguments: one about the site of the transitional capital, the other about whether IGAD-peacekeepers, including Ethiopian troops, should come to Somalia. (Beginning from 2004, there were plans to establish a regional peacekeeping mission called IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia, or IGASOM. IGASOM was expected to eventually reach 8,000 troops, but never materialized because of the reluctance of Somali stakeholders to let them in.)

The arguments about these questions led to chair-throwing brawl in the parliament in March 2005. Thereafter, the legislature split into two: the Mogadishu Group relocated to Mogadishu and insisted that the parliament convene there. “This robbed the TFG of the ability to muster a quorum, and the legislature failed to meet for a year. Relations deteriorated to a point that the two factions nearly went to war in September 2005. The TFG itself was paralyzed and weak, barely able to project its authority in the provisional capital of Baidoa. By late 2005, the TFG appeared to be yet another stillborn transitional government.”<sup>58</sup> In fact, by the end of 2005, the TFG barely controlled 10 per cent of Somalia, mostly around the Ethiopian border, and was utterly ineffective even there. Its most dangerous enemy, however, was not the usual roster of warlords, but a new and increasingly popular power-group.

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<sup>57</sup> Menkhaus 2007a: 196.

<sup>58</sup> Menkhaus 2007a: 196.

This new group was the Islamic Courts. The Courts were a bottom-up judicial system funded by the powerful Mogadishu business community to try and bring some law and order to a country without a government. According to scholars Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, the phenomenon of Islamic Courts in Somalia first appeared in Mogadishu in 1994, when Islamic clerics from the Abgal subclan of the Hawiye founded the first sharia court. “The establishment of the Islamic Courts was not so much an Islamist imperative as a response to the need for some means of upholding law and order. The Islamist agenda in the Courts was not particularly ‘programmatic’; they were not presided over by expert Islamic judges, nor were they adherents to any specific school of Islamic law. The enforcement of the Courts’ judgments depended on militias recruited from the local clan...The Islamic Courts were a huge success in dealing with criminality in north Mogadishu.”<sup>59</sup> It is important to point out that the Courts were a loose and heterogeneous coalition. It included moderates as well as more radical Salafists, but also a small and dangerous group of violent jihadists, who later went on to constitute al-Shabaab.

By 2006, the different courts, which united under the umbrella organization “Islamic Courts Union” (ICU), possessed a force of about 400 well-trained fighters. Apart from areas near the Ethiopian border, the ICU took over and controlled most of south-central Somalia by September 2006. Their success owed a large part to the fact, that they brought dramatic improvements in public security. Militia roadblocks and kidnappings were almost eliminated, while the main seaport and international airport in Mogadishu was reopened. The ICU even began the organization of trash collection [Menkhaus 2007a: 198].

The ICU was, however, far from united. In an internal struggle for power, the hardliners began to prevail. One of the most prominent figures, Hassan Dahir Aweys repeatedly called for jihad against Ethiopia. Ethiopia was also incensed because the ICU was supported by its arch-enemy Eritrea, and because several ICU-leaders - including Aweys - were former members of al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI), a defunct radical Islamist organization which conducted terrorist attacks in Ethiopia in the 1990s. In December 2006 the ICU-forces were about to advance on Baidoa, the seat of the TFG

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<sup>59</sup> Barnes-Hassan 2007: 2.

near the Ethiopian border, when Ethiopia decided to act. Requested by the TFG and with the backing of Washington, Ethiopian forces crossed the border to Somalia and attacked the Islamists, who were beaten and dispersed surprisingly quickly. By January, all of Somalia was in the hands of Ethiopia, and the TFG. The leadership of the ICU fled abroad (mostly to Eritrea), while most of the rank-and-file members went underground in Mogadishu, and began to wage a deadly and highly effective guerilla war against the Ethiopian troops.

Ethiopia initially wanted to withdraw from Somalia within weeks.<sup>60</sup> But Addis Ababa quickly realized that having chased away the stabilizing force of the ICU, the country would probably fall back into the chaos characterizing the years prior to the emergence of the Islamic Courts. Addis Ababa decided to stay on. To help the Ethiopians in stabilizing the country, and, eventually, to let them withdraw without leaving a security vacuum, a peacekeeping mission of the African Union was established. Shortly after the defeat of the ICU by the Ethiopians, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union decided to establish the AMISOM (African Union Mission to Somalia) mission. Its mandate was (i) to provide support to the TFG in its efforts towards the stabilization of the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation, (ii) to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and (iii) to create conducive conditions for long-term stabilization, reconstruction and development in Somalia [AU 2007: 2]. AMISOM was to comprise 9 infantry battalions of 850 personnel and was, initially, envisioned for six months. On 21 February 2007 the United Nations Security Council approved the mission's mandate [UN 2007a].

The first AMISOM troops - soldiers from the Ugandan army - arrived in Mogadishu in the first days of March 2007.<sup>61</sup> While Uganda constantly increased the number of its troops, other countries, which initially pledged soldiers (Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania), did not fulfill their promise. The only other country which sent troops was

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<sup>60</sup> The Guardian: „Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia 'within weeks'", 3 January 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jan/03/mainsection.international14>

<sup>61</sup> BBC News: „Ugandan troops 'not peacemakers'", 1 March 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6409167.stm>



Burundi, with the first soldiers arriving in December 2007 to join the Ugandans, who, by that time, numbered 1,600.<sup>62</sup>

The joined AMISOM, Ethiopian and TFG troops were, however, unable to suppress the anti-Ethiopian rebels, who themselves were by no means homogenous. Several moderate and radical, secular and Islamist factions were fighting against the Ethiopians, united only in their opposition to the ancient enemy occupying their home soil. From the different groups, the al-Shabaab (the youth) was by most reckoning the most efficient. The al-Shabaab has been led by Aden Hashi Farah "Ayrow" until 2008, when he was killed in an American operation. Ayrow was said to have trained with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In March 2008, al-Shabaab was added to the United States' list of "foreign terrorist organizations." Ironically, this made it more attractive to foreign jihadist fighters (Pakistanis, Yemenis, Moroccans, etc.), who flocked to Somalia to fight the Ethiopians. Their number was perhaps no more than 200-300 of the 8-10,000 total, but their experience and ruthlessness greatly increased the power of al-Shabaab. The influx of the foreigners might also explain, why some (though not all) al-Shabaab leaders repeatedly pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab was also aided by financial and material support from Eritrea, contributing to its success.

With the TFG controlling only a small part of Mogadishu and a deadly guerilla war raging all over the country, the Ethiopians effectively became bogged down in Somalia after 2007. Suffering from heavy casualties and apparent failure in pacifying the country, Addis Ababa finally decided to withdraw its troops. In December 2008/January 2009, the Ethiopian soldiers left Somalia for good, leaving behind only the AMISOM contingent of several thousand troops to help the new and fragile coalition government, which was formed in the neighboring Djibouti following the resignation of President Abdullahi Yusuf in December 2008.

### **3.4. 2009-2011: the “TFG 2.0”**

The election of a new president was necessitated following the resignation of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed on 29 December 2008, over the dismissal of the government of

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<sup>62</sup> BBC News: „Burundi troops join AU in Somalia”, 23 December 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7158412.stm>

Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein which was not approved by the Transitional Federal Parliament. Yusuf Ahmed was also under pressure from the international community (primarily the USA and the UN, but also from Ethiopia and Kenya) over the ineffectiveness of his government. In the event, the elections were held at a peace conference in Djibouti, which ended with an agreement calling for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in exchange for the cessation of armed confrontation. The parliament was subsequently expanded to 550 seats to accommodate ICU members, which then elected Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, a former ICU-chairman, to office. Ahmed then formed a new government (“TFG 2.0”) with Ali Shermarke as prime minister.

Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was born in 1964, and studied at Sudanese, Egyptian and Libyan universities, graduating in 1998. He has worked as a secondary school teacher of geography, Arabic, and religious studies in Somalia. After returning from his studies, Ahmed became involved in the ICU and was elected to head a small local sub-clan court in Jowhar. By 2004, Ahmed had become one of the leading figures in the Mogadishu Islamic Courts and he was elected as chairman. After the Ethiopian attack, Ahmed fled to Kenya, where he met the American ambassador. From there, he left for Yemen, where he lived until his election in 2009. During these years, he often stayed in Asmara, Eritrea, where the anti-Ethiopian Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) was formed by former ICU leaders. Ahmed chaired the executive committee of the ARS, which, by and large, remained insignificant, as it was too far away from Somalia to influence the situation. Ahmed nevertheless remained an important and authoritative figure in Somali politics. He was among the more moderate leaders of the ICU, which made him acceptable for the international partners of the TFG.

Nationally and internationally, there was great hope that the TFG 2.0 could be more successful than its predecessor. The new government looked initially promising, as, for the first time, it also included moderate Islamists. This has been a great improvement over the previous TFG 1.0, which, as we have seen, was composed largely of Ethiopian-friendly politicians. But because of Ahmed’s moderate views, international support and afraid of losing their own power, al-Shabaab quickly made it clear, that they will fight against the new government of the former Islamist leader. On 2 February, Sheikh Hassan Yakub, spokesman for the al-Shabaab rulers in the port of Kismayo said the war

will continue until Islamic law is restored across Somalia and that foreign governments are interfering in Somalia's political affairs. He also suggested that Sheikh Sharif's election victory was organized by the enemies of Islam.<sup>63</sup> Despite the fact, that the new TFG quickly introduced sharia law in Somalia, al-Shabaab decided keep on fighting the government, making a farce of their claim that they are fighting against the TFG because it is unIslamic.<sup>64</sup>

On the security front, al-Shabaab launched a big offensive against the new TFG in May 2009. The offensive centered on Mogadishu, and the rebels managed to capture most of the city but ultimately failed to overthrow the government, which, with the help of AMISOM, maintained control over a few square kilometers of the city. On July 11 2010, the al-Shabaab carried out suicide bombings against crowds watching a screening of the final match of the 2010 FIFA World Cup at two locations in Kampala, Uganda. The bombings left 74 dead and 70 injured and constituted the first attack of al-Shabaab outside of Somalia. According to an al-Shabaab spokesman, the bombings were in retaliation for Uganda's part in AMISOM.

Another al-Shabaab offensive in August and September 2010 was again aimed at taking control of the capital but failed dismally. Some 700 al-Shabaab fighters were killed and many more wounded. As of March 2011, across most of the city the AU troops pushed back al-Shabaab positions by as much as a kilometer. The presidential palace remains within range of al-Shabaab fire, but the port - under regular attack six months ago - has not been hit by a mortar since October 2010. Thanks to further offensives, AMISOM and TFG troops now had control of seven districts in the capital, leaving six contested and three under rebel control. Moreover, forces loyal to the TFG have made inroads in the countryside as well: for example, they have captured the strategically important Bulo Hawo town near the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Garowe Online: „Al Shabaab declare war on Somalia's new president”, 2 February 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Al\\_Shabaab\\_declare\\_war\\_on\\_Somalia\\_s\\_new\\_President\\_Sheikh\\_Sharif.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Al_Shabaab_declare_war_on_Somalia_s_new_President_Sheikh_Sharif.shtml)

<sup>64</sup> Arab News: „Shariah in Somalia”, 1 March 2009, <http://archive.arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=119757&d=1&m=3&y=2009>

<sup>65</sup> BBC News: „Somalia: Government captures al-Shabab militia bases”, 7 March 2011

It would be wrong, however, to underestimate the strength of the al-Shabaab. The radical militia still controls about 80% of the countryside, including Kismayo, the second biggest city, and the half of Mogadishu. The rebels are extremely motivated and, because of the constant fighting against Ethiopian, AMISOM and TFG troops in the last couple of years, have a lot of experience, especially in urban warfare. The recent successes by AMISOM can be probably explained by the inner problems of the al-Shabaab. According to insiders, a group of al-Shabaab commanders, mainly from south-central Somalia, led by Mukhtar Robow, feel marginalized by Ahmed Godane, his deputy from the northern Somaliland region, and foreign jihadist fighters (Pakistanis, Afghans, Algerians, etc.) who support him.<sup>66</sup> It seems also, that the goal of the two factions is different: the more moderate, “Somali” faction favors talks to resolve their differences with the TFG and also want aid agencies to greatly expand their area of operations, currently very limited by insecurity. The more radical, “international jihadist” factions shuns negotiations, and wants to establish a radical Islamist caliphate in Somalia, from where to spread the revolution to other states in the region, and, ultimately, to the world. These divisions between the al-Shabaab - always a heterogeneous group - could be one of the reasons for the current success of AMISOM. Moreover, Eritrea apparently ceased to support the rebels, removing an important source for weapons (see Chapter 4).

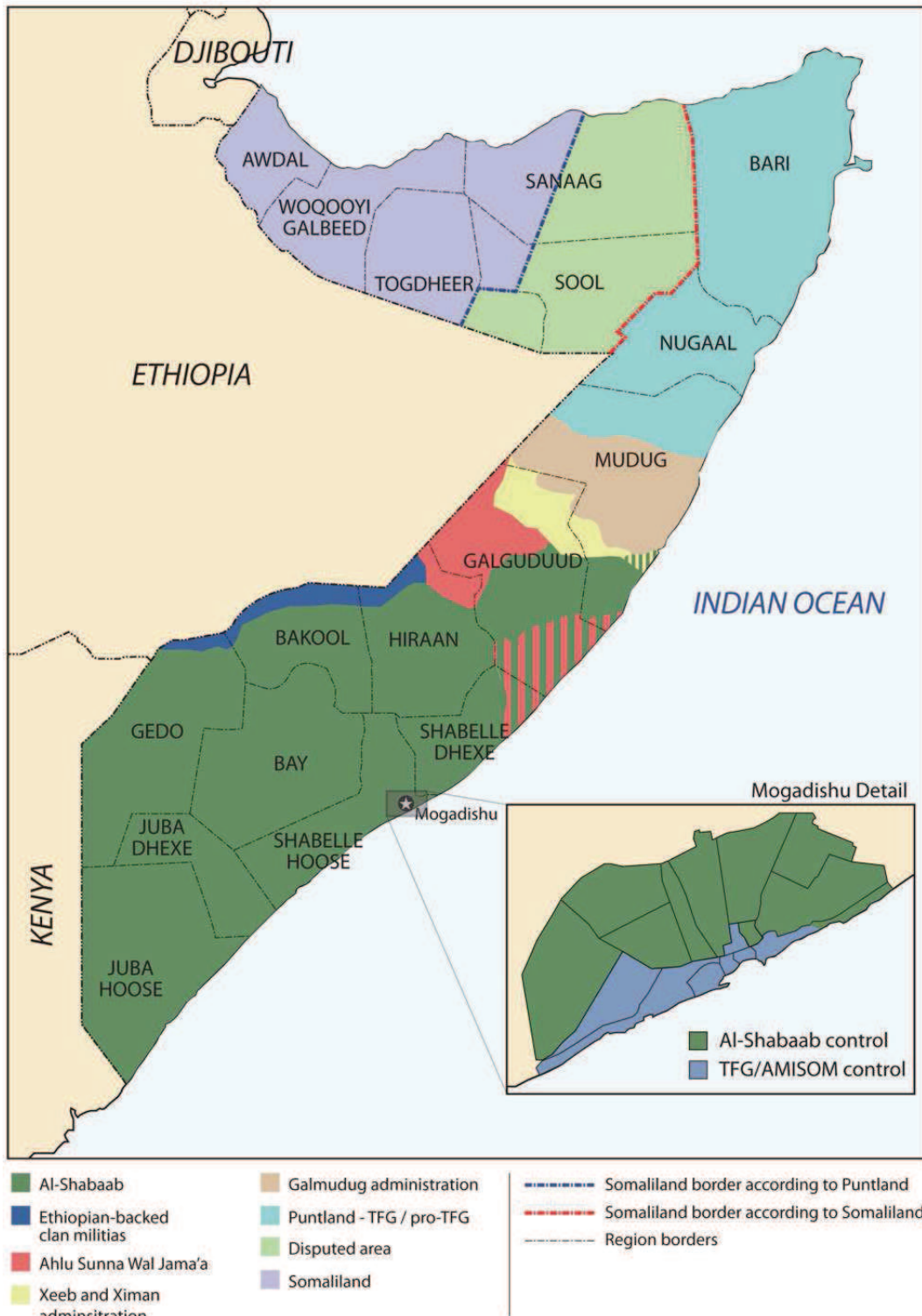
Another probable reason for the weakening of al-Shabaab is the strength of AMISOM. In line with the longstanding Ugandan demands for more troops, the Security Council in December 2010 decided to increase the force strength of AMISOM from the previously mandated strength of 8,000 troops to 12,000 troops, thereby enhancing its ability to carry out its mandate [UN 2010c: 3]. As of early 2011, there were 5,200 Ugandan peacekeepers and 3,126 from Burundi, with 2,000 from each country to be deployed in the course of the year 2011.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia: Al-Shabaab’s Split and its Absorption of Hizbul Islam [Intelligence Brief]”, 8 January 2011, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al-Shabaab\\_s\\_Split\\_and\\_its\\_Absorption\\_of\\_Hizbul\\_Islam\\_Intelligence\\_Brief.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al-Shabaab_s_Split_and_its_Absorption_of_Hizbul_Islam_Intelligence_Brief.shtml)

<sup>67</sup> The Monitor: „Uganda to Send 2,000 More Troops”, 28 March 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201103280023.html>

All in all, the security situation since the formation of the TFG 2.0 did not change too much. Despite the recent successes of AMISOM, approximately 90 percent of the country and half of Mogadishu were still in the hands of al-Shabaab. Only in Northern Somalia was the Ethiopian-backed Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ), a moderate grouping hostile to al-Shabaab, able to control significant parts of the country. Along the Ethiopian border, moreover, warlords backed by Addis Ababa managed to get a toehold, bolstered by frequent Ethiopian incursions (see Chapter 4). In the rest of the country, al-Shabaab held sway, as shown by this map from the Crisis Group:



*This map has been produced by the International Crisis Group. Sources: UN OCHA, WFP*

### Map 3: Somalia in 2011

(Source: International Crisis Group 2011: 27.)

## Chapter 4: The interaction between Somalia and the states of the East African RSC

### 4.1. Kenya

#### 4.1.1 Inside-out effects

##### 4.1.1.1. Refugees and recruitment

Scholar Daniel Lambach mentions refugee flows as one of the most important social effects of state failure on neighboring states. This is absolutely true in the Somali-Kenyan relationship. The growing Somali refugee population has obviously been one of the most visible inside-out effects of the Somali civil war in Kenya. Since 1991, Kenya has been one of the main destinations for Somali refugees. This was, and still is a rational choice on part of the Somalis: Kenya is a stable country, its northeastern part bordering Somalia is populated by fellow Somalis, and the common border is only lightly policed, making the transgression to Kenya relatively easy [Tóth 2010: 24-25]. Small wonder, that as of February 2010, Kenya had no fewer than 309,181 *registered* Somali refugees in two camps (249,285 in Dadaab, 39,082 in Kamuma) and in Nairobi (20,814) [UNHCR 2010a]. This has further expanded to 338,151 in September 2010 [Amnesty International 2010a].

The first year, in which a significant number of Somali refugees have been registered in Kenya was 1991, when approximately 95,000 arrived from Somalia [UNHCR 1995]. Their number grew to 153,000 in 2004, when the TFG 1.0 began its work. Since then, their number has continually expanded, reflecting badly on the performance of the TFG. The following table [based on UNHCR 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b] shows the numbers of Somali refugees in Kenya since 2005 (in thousands):



<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Somali refugees (thousand)</b>
<b>2005</b>	150,5
<b>2006</b>	173,7
<b>2007</b>	192,4
<b>2008</b>	259,1
<b>2009</b>	310,5
<b>2010 (February)</b>	309,2
<b>2010 (September)</b>	338,2

**Table 3: Somali refugees in Kenya 2005-2010**

Caring for this large number of refugees has obviously put a huge strain on Kenya, itself a poor country, all the more so because in addition to the Somalis there were 32,000 Ethiopian and 24,000 Sudanese refugees residing in the country as well [UNHCR 2010a]. According to Amnesty International, Kenya has not been adequately supported by its foreign partners in caring for the refugees: “The large numbers of Somali nationals and the resources required to support them presents a monumental challenge for the Kenyan authorities. Amnesty International considers that Kenya disproportionately shoulders the responsibility for large refugee flows from Somalia. Kenya needs more support from the international community to provide durable solutions to such a large number of refugees, in terms of both increased support for local integration projects and a substantial increase in the numbers of Somali nationals benefiting from resettlement programmes in third countries.”<sup>68</sup>

Although the Kenyan state does not contribute directly to the operational budget of UNHCR<sup>69</sup>, the refugee population has put a huge strain on the country. In general, refugees “contribute to economic and social conflicts by competing in the job market, thus lowering local wage levels. There is a possibility that refugees upset the ethnic balance within the province where they are sheltered. International and local funds necessary for the support of the refugees usually go to areas that are relatively poor and underdeveloped compared to the rest of the country, which might upset fragile political

<sup>68</sup> Amnesty International 2010a: 2.

<sup>69</sup> E-mail communication with UNHCR officer in Nairobi, February 2011.



balances. Refugee flows, especially in tropical and underdeveloped regions, can also lead to a spread of infectious diseases such as Malaria and HIV.”<sup>70</sup>

In fact the overcrowding has stretched the camps' resources and infrastructure beyond their capacities and led to conflict with Kenyans living in the area. To begin with, the host community of Dadaab is half the size of the refugee population. The inhabitants of Dadaab consist mostly of nomadic Somali herders, who were already struggling with the harsh arid and semi-arid environment with scanty vegetation to care for their animals. The scant resources are put under increasing strain from the refugee population. According to the Kenyan government's refugee camp officer, conflicts are bound to arise, as “the little resources that are there, they are shared with them [the refugees], the water, the space for grazing.”<sup>71</sup> Another problem is the lack of firewood: “the refugees, when they receive the food, [some of it] needs to be cooked. And that cooking actually requires fuel. Fuel means cutting down the trees to be able to get the fuel.”<sup>72</sup> A local leader also complained that “we have a lot of disturbances from the refugees. Sometimes the refugees are looting cattle and cows, goats, because of hunger...It is also putting pressure on our security. We don't have enough personnel to man all the borders. It is porous...So, what is the implication of having a large number of people over which you don't control? You have no idea who could be a threat to security.”<sup>73</sup> Similar problems are widely reported in other parts of Northern Kenya, according to a regional expert.<sup>74</sup> To ease the pressure and ameliorate living conditions, the Kenyan government approved an extension of the Dadaab camp in 2010, but the UNHCR said there is not enough land for the thousands expected to arrive.<sup>75</sup>

If Kenya has not received the necessary support, it is also not doing enough to alleviate the suffering of the Somali refugees. According to several reports, living conditions are very dire in the refugee camps, and the Kenyan host authorities have often neglected

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<sup>70</sup> Lambach 2007: 42.

<sup>71</sup> NPR: „Flow Of Somali Refugees Puts Strain On Kenyan Town”, 24 July 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/24/138658120/flow-of-somali-refugees-puts-strain-on-kenyan-town>

<sup>72</sup> NPR: „Flow Of Somali Refugees Puts Strain On Kenyan Town”

<sup>73</sup> NPR: „Flow Of Somali Refugees Puts Strain On Kenyan Town”

<sup>74</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>75</sup> UN News Service: „Somali refugees strain resources of neighbouring countries, UN official warns”, 3 May 2010

their duties or worse. Amnesty International fields a long list of problems, including overcrowding, policing, allegations of recruitment of refugees for military training and restrictions on the right to freedom of movement [Amnesty International 2010a]. Refugees are generally not permitted to leave the camps, unless in exceptional circumstances, and they have almost no livelihood opportunities. They complain that they are essentially living in an open prison.

Yet those who reach the camps can count themselves lucky. According to Human Rights Watch, Somalis crossing the border to Kenya are being abused by the Kenyan authorities [Human Rights Watch 2010]. Near Kenya's officially closed border with Somalia, police have free rein to intercept as many as possible of the estimated 10,000 mostly Somali asylum seekers who cross the border every month with the help of people smugglers. "Making no distinction between women, children, and men, police often use violence, unlawful detention in appalling overcrowded conditions, and threats of deportation to extort money from them. Some police officers rape women near the border. During the first ten weeks of 2010, hundreds, if not thousands, of Somali asylum seekers unable to pay were unlawfully sent back to Somalia."<sup>76</sup>

All these registered and unregistered acts of violence and neglect against the refugees are more than mere human rights issues. Given the aforementioned abuses, the terrible living conditions in the camps and the sometimes careless attitude of Kenyan authorities towards the refugees, Kenya risks alienating its sizeable Somali refugee population. This is a big risk, as Kenya is possibly driving some of them into the arms of al-Shabaab. There are already some reports of al-Shabaab infiltration to the refugee camps.

In July 2009, al-Shabaab reportedly recruited refugees in camps inside Kenya, promising paradise and \$300 each to potential recruits [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/07]. In October 2009, Human Rights Watch made the same claim, while pointing out, that Kenya was itself unlawfully recruiting Somalis in order to train them and send them to Somalia in support of the TFG [Human Rights Watch 2009b]. According to Amnesty International, Somali people who arrived in the autumn of 2010 alleged in interviews that members and sympathizers of al-Shabaab, were present in the camps or

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<sup>76</sup> Human Rights Watch 2010: 4.

travelled through it [Amnesty International 2010a: 2]. The huge, poor and disaffected youth population in the camps obviously presents a big, potential recruitment pool for the al-Shabaab.

It is of course difficult to assess the success of al-Shabaab's recruitment drive in the camps. There are no credible informations about refugees becoming al-Shabaab fighters and returning to Somalia to fight against the TFG. However, since 2009 Kenya has increasingly come to see the influx of refugees - 80 percent of whom are women and children - as a national security issue. This was of course exacerbated by the threats al-Shabaab repeatedly issued against Kenya, the first of which came in June 2009. Kenya's new attitude has been succinctly summed up by Kenyan police deputy spokesperson Charles Owino, who in response to a Human Rights Watch report detailing human rights abuses said: "We are not supposed to associate a particular ethnic group with terrorism. It is not appropriate and it is not in order. But generally, we know that there is general fear of some of these cases. Our country has been very unfortunate. We had a serious bombing in this country, and therefore *we cannot compromise matters of security*."<sup>77</sup>

Responding to the threats of the Islamists, Kenya's National Security Council unlawfully set up a "security vetting committee" to screen all refugees' applications for movement passes. At the time, the Ministry was worried that existing, already very strict movement pass procedures did not ensure proper security screening of movement pass applicants [Human Rights Watch 2010:71]. This amounted to a further limitation of the movement of the refugees.

Recruitment among the *registered* refugees is, however, only one part of the security problem for Kenya. A similar concern is the issue of *unregistered* Somali refugees residing in the country, especially in Nairobi. Their number is extremely hard to guess. By December 31, 2008, UNHCR had registered 15,090 Somali refugees in the Kenyan capital, This number is widely believed to be only a small fraction of the total number of Somali nationals, which is possibly in the tens of thousands and maybe well over

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<sup>77</sup> Voice of America: „Human Rights Watch Condemns Abuse of Somali Refugees in Kenya“, 17 June 2010

100,000 [Human Rights Watch 2009a: 43]. According to Human Rights Watch, only about the half of the refugees registers in the refugee camps. The other half makes their way to Nairobi, Kenya's capital, where very few are able to register as refugees due to the limited capacity of the government and the UNHCR [Human Rights Watch 2010: 4].

It is also important to point out the difficulty in distinguishing between Kenyan Somalis and refugees or migrants from Somalia. Since the independence of Kenya, there was a sizeable Kenyan-Somali minority in the country, living mainly in the North Eastern Province, close to the Somali border, or in the Eastleigh district of Nairobi (see below). The exact number of Kenyan-Somalis is also difficult to determine. According to the Kenyan census of 2010, there were 2,385,572 Somalis (including Somalis in the refugee camps) in Kenya, making them the sixth biggest ethnic group in the country.<sup>78</sup> This is an astonishing growth rate, considering that in 1989 there were only 900,000 Kenyan-Somalis, and can probably only be explained by the fact, that many Somali refugees, who came to Kenya since 1991, were counted this time as Kenyan citizens.<sup>79</sup>

All this means that there is a huge number of Somali and/or Somali-Kenyan youths living in Kenya as either registered or unregistered refugees, or quasi-citizens. There is a possibility that they could make up a sizeable potential recruiting pool for al-Shabaab, especially if they are driven into the arms of extremists by the brutality and inhumanness of the Kenyan authorities. However, until now, there are only isolated reports of radicals recruiting fighters in Kenya. This can be probably attributed to the heavy-handed approach of the Kenyan authorities, who are - among other measures - trying to restrict the movements of refugees to limit their recruitment to al-Shabaab. Nevertheless, the (potential) recruitment of Somali and/or Kenyan-Somali youth to al-Shabaab is a very dangerous security threat for the country, compounding the already mentioned negative social effects.

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<sup>78</sup> 2009 Population & Housing Census Results, 31 August 2010, <http://www.knbs.or.ke/Census%20Results/Presentation%20by%20Minister%20for%20Planning%20revised.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Nairobi Star: „2009 Census Delayed Over Somali Numbers”, 9 January 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201001120871.html>

#### **4.1.1.2. The threat of terrorism for Kenya**

##### **Before 2004**

On the military front, perhaps the most important inside-out effect has been the export of terrorism from Somalia to Kenya in the form of terrorist acts planned and/or committed in the country. As we have seen, some leaders of al-Shabaab have pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda and have the stated goal to export the Islamist revolution to other countries in the region, like Kenya, so this has definitely been a grave concern throughout the years since 2009. The two countries share a long and porous border, where, according to Buzan and Wæver, security threats travel easily. 10 per cent of the population of Kenya is Muslim, representing a vast pool of potential Islamists/terrorists.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, in the past, the country has been repeatedly attacked by terrorists, most of them foreign-born. It is probably useful to give a short account of the past terror attacks on Kenya. This is important to show the sense of vulnerability to terror attacks Kenya had to endure over the years, because this vulnerability shapes its heavy-handed response to this threat very strongly.

The first major attack of the modern era on Kenyan soil was the Norfolk Hotel bombing in December, 1980, which killed sixteen people and injured more than one hundred. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) claimed responsibility. The deadliest attack came two decades later. On August 7, 1998, al-Qaeda attacked the American Embassy in Nairobi with a truck-bomb. This attack killed some 220 people and injured roughly 5,000 Embassy staff, passers-by and people in neighboring buildings. Al-Qaeda simultaneously attacked the U.S. Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, killing 11 and injuring another 70. The Kenyan attack also produced the first known al-Qaeda operative from Kenya, Sheikh Ahmad Salem Swedan, from Mombasa, as well as Abdullah Muhammad Fazul, a Comorian who reportedly holds a Kenyan passport, though his legal citizenship remains unclear.

The third big terrorist attack on Kenyan soil occurred on November 28, 2002. Two SAM-7 missiles were fired at, but narrowly missed, an Israeli passenger jet taking off from Moi International Airport in Mombasa. Five minutes later, a truck-bomb detonated

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<sup>80</sup> CIA World Factbook

just outside the lobby of the Israeli-owned and frequented Paradise Hotel in Kikambala along the beach north of Mombasa. Fifteen people were killed and another 35 injured in that attack.

Shortly thereafter, in June 2003, Kenyan authorities foiled a plot to attack the temporary U.S. Embassy in Nairobi using a truck-bomb and an explosive-laden plane. The plane was to be taken from Nairobi's Wilson Airport. This same airport acted as the staging base for al-Qaeda operatives' entry flights to Somalia in the early 1990s [Combating Terrorism Center at West Point 2010: 6].

Even this short list illustrates the point, that, prior to 2004, Kenya was very vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The reasons for this are clear, and summed up by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point in their seminal paper about al-Qaeda activity in the Horn: "First, Kenya provides a target-rich environment for terrorists because of its relatively advanced economy and its long-standing ties with the United Kingdom, United States, and Israel. Second, Kenya maintains a functioning sovereign government, one increasingly subject to public opinion. The former limits the operational freedom of Western intelligence and counterterrorism units, and the latter heightens the cost of being seen to be doing others' bidding in the "War on Terror." Third, Kenya suffers from weak governance in a number of critical areas, including security and the criminal justice system. This discourages those Kenyans who might have relevant information from providing it to the authorities. Fourth, the presence of a disaffected minority Muslim population, especially along the Kenyan coast, provides al-Qa'ida operatives an environment in which they can operate with less security pressure than elsewhere in the region. Simply put, Kenya is an attractive place for al-Qa'ida to operate."<sup>81</sup>

As the repeated attacks show, Kenya was indeed extremely vulnerable to attacks from al-Qaeda. Sources show, that al-Qaeda even had an active cell in Kenya beginning from 1993. According to documents of the Harmony Database of the US Department of Defence, "multiple al-Qa'ida cells operated unimpeded throughout the country (mainly

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<sup>81</sup> Combating Terrorism Center at West Point 2007: 47. The same views are echoed by Patrick 2010: 94-96.

in Nairobi and Mombasa.”<sup>82</sup> The documents paint a remarkable portrait of al-Qaeda cells “freely operating in Kenya, with few expressed concerns about being monitored or detained by Kenyan police or security forces...Indeed, the only anxiety expressed in Harmony document communications is a complaint in 1993, during the worst moments of political crisis in Kenya, that “Kenya is not a good place.. [T]he cost of living is high, plus corruption is dangerously prevalent - there is theft, house break-ins, no political stability, and it is possible there will be an explosion in the country.”<sup>83</sup>

Having pointed out Kenya’s long history of terrorist attacks, the question now is: how much of this terrorism activity prior to 2004 was related to the instability in neighboring Somalia? Had the Kenyan al-Qaeda-cell any connection to the instability in Somalia? Has it been financed by Somalis? Had it any Somali members? Did it have training camps inside Somalia? According to available sources, the answer to all these questions is no. There is no evidence that the planners of the 1998 embassy bombings (or any other attacks for that matter) had used Somalia as a rear base, or that Somali citizens were involved in the planning or execution of the bombings, or that Somali warlords or extremists would have financed al-Qaeda’s operations in Kenya.

In fact, not al-Qaeda, but another Islamist group was in the focus of the Kenyan authorities during these years. During the early 90s a genuinely Somali Islamist group the al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI) was active in Kenya. Funded in the early 1980s, the goal of AIAI was the establishment of a pan-Somali, Salafist emirate. AIAI had built considerable infrastructure for recruitment, fundraising and communication, among the Somali population in Nairobi, Mombasa, and the North Eastern province bordering Somalia. “Like their counterparts in Somalia, Kenyan members of al-Itihaad promoted an “agitative, radical version of Islam” inspired by Wahhabi doctrine. The group has long been closely associated with the Sixth Street “Salaama Aleykom” Mosque in the Nairobi suburb of Eastleigh, which has at times reportedly done fundraising for it.”<sup>84</sup>

It is important to note, however, that AIAI actually never attacked on Kenyan soil: its main target was Ethiopia. Moreover, by 2004 al-Itihaad ceased to be an active force in

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<sup>82</sup> Combating Terrorism Center at West Point 2007: 45.

<sup>83</sup> Combating Terrorism Center at West Point 2007: 45.

<sup>84</sup> International Crisis Group 2005: 7-8.



Kenya, where, according to most observers, its public influence has anyway diminished in the years after 1998: “They’ve been discredited”, a leading member of the Kenyan Somali community told Crisis Group. “People have become disappointed by them. They’re not as strong as they were.”<sup>85</sup>

Summing up, prior to 2004, there have been multiple terror attacks in Kenya. The country also served as a base for al-Qaeda and AIAI terrorists (the latter being made up by Somalis mostly). But it must be also pointed out, that there hasn’t been any terrorist attack on Kenyan soil committed by Somali terrorists. The only Somali radical group active in Kenya – AIAI – has used the country only as a rear base, from which to organize their operations in Somalia and Ethiopia. It thus seems that prior to 2004, the instability in Somalia did not spill over to Kenya in the form of terrorist activity.

#### **Terrorism threat from Somalia after 2004**

After a foiled attack of al-Qaeda in 2003 on the temporary U.S. Embassy in Nairobi using a truck-bomb and an explosive-laden plane, there has been a significant lull in terrorist attacks in Kenya.<sup>86</sup> The 2004 and 2005 State Department Country Reports on Terrorism nevertheless complain about “slow progress towards the overall strengthening of its capabilities to combat terrorism, prosecute terror suspects, or respond to emergency situations”, painting a somewhat contradictory picture of a country which has been repeatedly targeted by terrorist attacks, yet does not act sufficiently against this threat [Department of State 2004]. What is particularly puzzling is the fact, that throughout these years, Kenya lacked proper counterterrorism legislation. Although Kenya published a draft “Suppression of Terrorism Bill” in 2003, it had to withdraw it after harsh criticism from human rights groups and Kenyan Muslim communities. The absence of an effective anti-money-laundering bill also irked the Department of State, yet Kenyan lawmakers obviously regarded it as not necessary [Department of State 2008].

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<sup>85</sup> International Crisis Group 2005: 7-8.

<sup>86</sup> A final incident, not associated with al-Qa’ida, occurred on May 12, 2006, when three assailants fire-bombed the Nairobi offices of the Christian radio station Hope-FM.



The threat of terrorism emanating from Somalia to Kenya only surfaced in early 2007, when Ethiopia removed the ICU from Somalia, and many of its fighters fled to the Kenyan-Somali border. The Kenyan military drastically increased its numbers on the Somalia border, and worked closely with police elements in the region to block ICU forces and associated individuals from infiltrating Kenyan territory. Kenyan security forces apprehended several suspected extremist leaders during these operations [Department of State 2007].

Even more frightening for Kenya was the fight of anti-Ethiopian rebels in Somalia throughout 2007-2008. As already noted, the Somali rebels were soon joined by international jihadist elements and al-Qaeda fighters. The escalating conflict in Somalia provided a permissive environment for terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda operatives and al-Shabaab. The most serious threat to Kenya came from al-Qaeda operatives such as Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (aka Harun Fazul), and Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, who were responsible for the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings. Al-Qaeda also had a support network in the coastal region and in parts of Nairobi, such as the Eastleigh District [Department of State 2008]. However, this threat on their doorstep still did not prompt Kenyan lawmakers to introduce any significant counterterrorism legislation. The 2008 State Department Report once again noted with despair that Kenya was one of only two countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group without an anti-money laundering law [Department of State 2008]. In 2009 the Kenyan anti-money-laundering bill was finally passed by parliament and signed into law, but remains non-operational (see below), while, as of early 2011, the Suppression of Terrorism Bill is still not in force [Department of State 2009].

### **Since 2009**

The introduction of the anti-money-laundering bill can probably be attributed to the fact, that, after the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army from Somalia in early 2009, the radical Islamist al-Shabaab group gained ground, heightening the tensions on the Somali-Kenyan border, and increasing the possibility of a terrorist attack in Kenya. Clearly, Nairobi felt itself threatened by the successful al-Shabaab. Only couple of weeks after the withdrawal of the Ethiopians, officials in Kenya warned of an imminent

attack by Somalia-based militants tied to al-Qaeda. Internal Security Minister George Saitoti said Kenya was taking measures to ensure the attack does not occur. Saitoti also cited a US report by a spy agent, who warned that Kenya was likely to face terror attacks as extremists plot to hit US targets. Saitoti termed the remarks serious [Africa Research Bulletin: 2009/02].

Further proof of Kenya's vulnerability came in May 2009, when a senior Somali militant leader, Abbas Abdikadir, was arrested and held in Kenya on 21 May as he boarded a flight to Eritrea. Kenyan anti-terrorism police seized Abdikadir and held him for questioning in Nairobi after he was arrested at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. He was reported to have chartered a Kenyan aircraft to Eritrea, despite his name appearing on the US list of top al-Qaeda operatives wanted for trial over terrorism. The arrest came hours after information revealed that Sheikh Dahir Aweys, one of the leaders of al-Shabaab had been using Kenya partly to plan his latest attacks against the Somali interim government. Kenyan anti-terrorism police were also on the lookout for another key al-Shabaab leader and financier, Sheikh Ummal, who was believed to own property in Nairobi, sources said [Africa Research Bulletin: 2009/05]. These reports coincided with the State Department's already mentioned 2008 Country Report on Terrorism, which alleged that a group of al-Qaeda supporters was active at the Coast and in parts of Nairobi.

Because of these developments, the Kenyan security services became increasingly concerned by the possibility of an attack in Nairobi committed by al-Shabaab/al-Qaeda, all the more so because al-Shabaab began repeatedly to issue threats pledging an attack. When the embattled government of Somalia pleaded for help from its African neighbors in June 2009, Sheik Hasan Yacqub, al-Shabaab spokesman said for example that if Kenya tries to help the TFG, al-Shabaab will attack Kenya and "destroy the tall buildings of Nairobi."<sup>87</sup> Because of the threats, Kenya announced that it is increasing the ground training of its security forces in several parts of the country [ARB 2009/06], and counterterrorism officials warned Westerners to stay away from Nairobi's shopping malls fearing possible suicide attacks by al-Shabaab, showing that Nairobi is not taking

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<sup>87</sup> Reuters: „Somalia's cabinet declares state of emergency”, 20 June 2009, [http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/06/20/idUSLK716571.\\_CH\\_.2400](http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/06/20/idUSLK716571._CH_.2400)

the issue lightly [ARB 2009/07]. In August, Kenyan police launched a manhunt for officials of NGOs linked to al-Shabaab, whose agents have been recruiting unsuspecting young Kenyans. The group was planning to recruit 1,500 youths with the help of the NGOs, police investigations revealed. As a cover, the NGOs were registered as humanitarian agencies and recruits only realize they have been enlisted for combat duty once they get to Somalia [ARB 2009/08]. There were even reports, that al-Shabaab has visited families in Mombasa's Somali neighborhood to solicit donations for jihad [Africa Confidential 2009/21].

At the same time, however, Kenyan officials tried to downplay the threat emanating from Somalia. Prime Minister Raila Odinga said in response to the threats that "they are threatening to bomb us but we don't want to respond to al-Shabaab at all." In the same vein, an official in the ministry of Internal Security told the Daily Nation, Kenya's biggest newspaper, that al-Shabaab is not itself considered a serious threat to Kenya, "not in the conventional sense" because its main concerns are domestic [ARB 2009/06].

The position that al-Shabaab is mainly concerned with domestic issues and that their threats are mostly rhetoric has been somehow strengthened by repeated statements of high-ranking al-Shabaab members, who tried to dispel the fear of the Kenyan authorities. Sheikh Abdifitah Ibrahim Ali, spokesman for al-Shabaab in Southern Juba said for example, that the rebel group will not carry out any attacks against Kenya because their neighbor is not harassing them, adding that the al-Shabaab warnings against Kenya were "just verbal."<sup>88</sup> Likewise, Sheikh Abdirahiin Ali Mudey, a top al-Shabaab official in Juba region said al-Shabaab is not ready to go war with Kenya, denying that they have issued orders to get rid of border signs between Kenya and Somalia.<sup>89</sup>

Contradictory messages from al-Shabaab are not surprising. As already noted, the movement itself is a more or less loose network of Islamist groups, unified only by their

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<sup>88</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia's Al-Shabaab denies attack against Kenya”, 2 December 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_s\\_Al-Shabaab\\_denies\\_attack\\_against\\_Kenya.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_s_Al-Shabaab_denies_attack_against_Kenya.shtml)

<sup>89</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia: Al-Shabaab official claims fight with ONLF”, 17 December 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al-Shabaab\\_official\\_claims\\_fight\\_with\\_ONLF\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al-Shabaab_official_claims_fight_with_ONLF_printer.shtml)

opposition to the TFG. The group of foreign jihadis is more radical in their rhetoric and extreme in their theology. They are also willing to be belligerent towards the neighboring countries, whereas the more moderate, “indigenous” part of the movement tries to sound more conciliatory towards the neighboring states, in order not to provoke them.

A further good example of the uncoordinated messages from al-Shabaab occurred in January 2010, when a six-minute video clip appeared on an al-Shabaab linked website. The downloadable song opened with the sound of gunfire and a man in Arab and Swahili sings: "We have arrived at the border, we will enter Kenya, and Inshallah we will get to Nairobi... when we get there, we will fight, we will kill, because we have weapons, enough weapons!"<sup>90</sup> One day later, al Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage told Reuters by telephone the group had not posted the recording. "We didn't threaten Kenya. That story is a false one. We never posted that on the internet ... Everything needs to be checked first by the media to make sure they know what they are writing about," Rage said. Commenting on this issue, Afyare Abdi Elmi, a Somali political science professor at Qatar University told Reuters that "Al Shabaab is not a homogeneous organization that has the same stance on certain issues...One wing may want to launch attacks in the region, and others do not have an opinion or do not agree."<sup>91</sup>

Despite the fact, that the threats of al-Shabaab proved to be hollow, the Kenyan security services chose to follow an extremely heavy-handed approach, even bordering on paranoia, to deal with the threat of terrorism. In one well-documented case IRIN News reported of a Somali refugee in Nairobi, who, in the span of twelve months, had been arrested more than 10 times by the Kenyan police and paid more than US\$300 in fines to secure his release.<sup>92</sup> Despite holding identification papers issued by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the man and his grandmother were held for two days as illegal

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<sup>90</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia: Al Shabaab threaten to attack Kenya capital”, 21 January 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al\\_Shabaab\\_threaten\\_to\\_attack\\_Kenya\\_capital.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al_Shabaab_threaten_to_attack_Kenya_capital.shtml)

<sup>91</sup> Reuters: „Somali rebels deny threatening to attack Nairobi”, 22 January 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/01/22/idUSLDE60L09W>

<sup>92</sup> IRIN News: „Raids and rancour”, 27 January 2010, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=87891>

migrants, and released only after paying a substantial sum to the police. "They said I was Al-Shabab [insurgents fighting the Somali government]...What happened was wrong; we are hosted here by this government and yet the government of Kenya targeted us," said Hassan. "There is a rank hostility towards the Somali people and we are feeling hunted here."

George Saitoti, head of Kenyan Internal Security clearly admitted in 2010 that "we know there are elements sympathetic to al-Shabab,...and there may be some of them [al-Shabab operatives] around here."<sup>93</sup> The Kenyan authorities' heavy-handed response to this threat is, however, questionable. On several occasions, Somali or Somali-looking persons were discriminately harassed and arrested. In another a widely publicized incident in January 2010, for instance, Kenyan police and paramilitary forces have arrested as many as 400 Somali immigrants during a security sweep in Nairobi. The sweep followed a violent protest by Muslim youths in the capital Friday, which the Kenyan government said was backed by militants in Somalia. More than a dozen parliament members from Somalia were also being detained.<sup>94</sup> The raid on Eastleigh followed claims by Kenya's Interior Minister George Saitoti that the protest by hundreds of Muslim youths a couple of days earlier had the backing of al-Shabaab. The protesters took to the streets to demand the release of a radical Jamaican-born cleric, Abdullah al-Faisal, who was arrested in Kenya on December 31 while on a preaching tour. Several demonstrators unfurled a black flag adopted by al-Shabaab and other Islamic extremist groups around the world. Kenyan riot police fired tear-gas and live bullets during running battles, which killed and wounded more than a dozen people. At least two people died during nearly nine hours of mayhem in the heart of the capital. The Kenyan Somali community promptly accused the government of branding them al-Shabaab sympathizers to cover up the failure of its security system and alleged that the

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<sup>93</sup> NPR: „Somalia's Al-Shabab Spreads Its Message In Kenya”, 6 October 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130353001>

<sup>94</sup> Voice of America: „Kenya Cracks Down on Somali Immigrants”, 18 January 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Kenya-Cracks-Down-on-Somali-Immigrants-81990817.html>

government actions amounted to victimization and harassment of the Somali community.<sup>95</sup>

Admittedly, the Kenyan authorities have to walk a thin line. On the one hand, they have to make sure that their country does not become again a place for terrorist activity and attacks. On the other hand, they have to be very careful in their fight against terrorism, otherwise they risk alienating the Muslim population of the country, especially the Somalis.<sup>96</sup> This dilemma is compounded by the fact, that the security services deal with an enigmatic opponent, the al-Shabaab, which sends contradictory messages about its goals and lacks a clear hierarchical structure and leadership.

Justified or not, the heavy-handed approach of the Kenyan security services was obviously not working. According to a March 2010 United Nations Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia, “members of Shabaab and Hizbul Islam travel with relative freedom to and from Nairobi, where they raise funds, engage in recruitment and obtain treatment for wounded fighters.” [UN 2010a: 26]. The report also noted that several radical imams of Nairobi mosques were openly sympathizing with, and gathering funds for, al-Shabaab. One radical imam even pointed out in a sermon, that “funding the Jihad is an individual duty for every Muslim. If you cannot physically join the Jihad, then it is mandatory that you finance it... It is also permitted to shoot any obstructionist with five bullets.”<sup>97</sup>

One reason for the apparent failure of the Kenyan police to curb the activity of al-Shabaab in Nairobi has probably been the fact that they were profiting from the presence of a large number of (registered or unregistered) Somalis. Too aggressive a stance would have robbed parts the Kenyan police and/or government officials of a lucrative business. In February 2010, Kenya’s biggest daily newspaper, the *Daily Nation* reported, that an “intricate syndicate” was working, through which some foreigners had acquired national identity cards and passports by colluding with government officers in the Ministry of Immigration. “A senior immigration officer who

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<sup>95</sup> Daily Nation: „Eastleigh traders protest over crackdown”, 22 January 2010, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/847724/-/vpengl/-/index.html>

<sup>96</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>97</sup> UN 2010a: 26.

talked to the Nation on condition of anonymity said millions of shillings exchanged hands between foreigners and "brokers" who the foreigners pay for entry into the country annually. He said it costs between Sh100,000 and Sh500,000 to get one individual into the country, and more than Sh5 million for those who want to end up in Europe or North America."<sup>98</sup> Embassies of Western countries have recently noticed a growing number of Kenyan citizens with Somali-sounding names applying for visas.<sup>99</sup>

As already mentioned, the Kenyan police has quite often been accused of soliciting bribes from Somalis.<sup>100</sup> According to a detailed report of the Humanitarian Policy Group, based on interviews with Somalis living in Nairobi, arrests are almost always made with a view to extorting money from detainees, who are usually released once a bribe has been paid. Allegedly, so lucrative is extortion in Eastleigh that officers not based in the district often come to 'work' there specifically to extort money from refugees. This practice intensifies on Fridays, as more police officers are lured to Eastleigh to look for extra money for the weekend. According to all the refugees interviewed in Eastleigh by the Humanitarian Policy Group, patrols and searches are deliberately arranged to maximize bribe-taking [Humanitarian Policy Group 2010: 18].

Further proof of corruption and unreliability among the Kenyan police came in March 2011, when a terror suspect disappeared from police custody in the Kenyan border town of Busia and fled to Uganda. Hashi Hussein Farah was alleged to have links with the al-Shabaab rebels in Somalia and al-Qaeda. The Australian passport holder was intercepted at the Busia border point by Kenyan Immigration officers on March 9 and handed over to police. But he disappeared four days later when he was scheduled to be taken to Nairobi for interrogation by the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit. The Kenyan police released him under unclear circumstances that suggested the police took a bribe from him for his ransom. Three police officers were suspended because of the issue.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Daily Nation: „Porous borders raise security fears in spite of crackdown“, 15 February 2010, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/862890/-/vqjalw/-/index.html>

<sup>99</sup> Personal interview, November 2010, Nairobi.

<sup>100</sup> IRIN News: „Raids and rancour“

<sup>101</sup> The Independent: „Wanted Al Shabaab Terror Suspect Arrested in Uganda“, 2 April 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004020877.html>



Fear of an imminent al-Shabaab attack became obviously even stronger after the group's twin-attack on Kampala, Uganda, on 11 July 2010, claiming more than 70 lives. Prior to the bombings, Kenyan police seized large arms caches in various parts of the country, including guns, ammunition, and hand grenades. On July 6, Kenya's anti-terrorism police unit shot and killed a man from northeastern Kenya, who was in possession of 300 electric detonators. The police said the detonators, which are usually used in the mining industry, may also be used for making improvised explosive devices.<sup>102</sup> These ominous signs were, however, not enough for the Kenyan police to derail the plan of the attackers, who travelled through Kenya on their way to Kampala [ARB 2010/08]. After the bombings, three Kenyans were arrested by the security forces in Mombasa and the Northeastern part of the country. They were controversially transferred to Uganda, where they appeared on 30 July in a Kampala magistrates court and were charged with the murders of 76 people through the bombings. Hussein Hassan Agad, 27, Mohamed Adan Abdow, 25, and Idris Magundu, 42, were also charged with terrorism and 10 counts of attempted murder [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/07]. During August, another seven Kenyans were arrested and deported to Kampala, because of their alleged involvement in the planning and execution of the bombings.

Following the Kampala attack, Kenya security agencies have understandably intensified surveillance and a crackdown against suspected terrorists, reported the Daily Nation.<sup>103</sup> "Revelations by suspects behind last month's attack in Kampala that they had undergone training in Somalia has raised fears that an al Qaeda-trained terror cell is active in Kenya and neighboring countries. The suspects are said to have been behind numerous foiled attacks targeting western interests in the country. The cell is said to be composed of Kenyans and nationals from neighboring countries under terror mastermind Abdalla Fazul, who is linked to two attacks in Kenya. Fazul has been indicted over the 1998 August 7 terrorist attack against the US embassy in Nairobi and bombing of the Israel-owned Paradise hotel in Kikambala, Kilifi District. Most members of the new terror cell are said to have fled Somalia in 2006 when Ethiopia

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<sup>102</sup> Voice of America: „Kenyan Police Arrest Several Men For Uganda Bombing”, July 16 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Kenyan-Police-Arrest-Several-Men-For-Uganda-Bombing--98609459.html>

<sup>103</sup> Daily Nation: „New Front Opened in War On Terror”, 15 August 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008160910.html>



attacked the war-torn country to prop up the beleaguered transitional government. Kenya Police Anti-Terrorism Unit boss Nicholas Kamwende recently confirmed that numerous terror attacks had been foiled but refused to give details.”<sup>104</sup> In another, separate incident, Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) arrested 12 suspects they found with materials for making bombs in Mpeketoni, Lamu Island, off the coast. The suspects arrested on 21 August 2010 included three Tanzanians who allegedly arrived from Somalia with maps of buildings in Nairobi, and instructions on assembling a bomb. The others were Kenyans [ARB 2010/08].

The increased allegations of terrorist plotting, and public threats by al-Shabaab leaders led to a heightened recognition among Kenyan government officials and civil society that Kenya remained vulnerable to terrorist attacks, acknowledged the State Department couple of weeks after the Ugandan bombings. “Whereas Kenyans have traditionally perceived terrorism as primarily a ‘foreign’ problem, during the past year an increasing number of Kenyan citizens and government officials came to recognize that their own country and society were threatened by violent extremists” [Department of State: 2009].

On 3 December 2010, unidentified men killed three Kenyan policemen in two separate grenade and gun attacks in Nairobi. Apart from the fact, that the attack happened in Eastleigh, there was no indication of al-Shabaab or terrorist intentions involved. Nevertheless, Kenyan police arrested 346 foreigners, mainly Somalis, after the attack, giving further proof of the heightened nervousness of the security forces. Anthony Kibuchi, Nairobi's provincial police chief didn't even try to dispel the impression that the security swoop was directed against immigrants. "The security operation on aliens was carried out all over Nairobi," he said.<sup>105</sup> As of March 2011, no credible link between this particular attack and al-Shabaab has emerged.

The one and only attack on Kenyan soil, which can be attributed to al-Shabaab was most probably a coincidence.<sup>106</sup> On 20 December 2010, a bomb exploded on a Uganda-bound bus in central Nairobi during a security search before it left for Kampala, killing

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<sup>104</sup> Daily Nation: „New Front Opened in War On Terror”

<sup>105</sup> Reuters: „Kenya arrests hundreds of foreigners after attacks”, 6 December 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/kenyaNews/idAFLDE6B50DC20101206?sp=true>

<sup>106</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

three (including the terrorist) and wounding dozens. The suspect has been identified as Albert John Olanda, who entered Kenya from Tanzania on October 23. The circumstances of the explosion suggest that the explosion was accidental, as Olanda dropped the grenade while being inspected. According to a spokesman of the police, Olanda, carrying a paper bag while entering the bus, became extremely nervous during the course of the inspection. "In the process, the said passenger dropped the paper bag on the ground and immediately thereafter there was a loud explosion. The explosion injured the said passenger, other passengers and passersby...Olanda was en route to the Ugandan capital, which officials believe was the intended site of the attack."<sup>107</sup>

To sum up, the threat of Somali radicals exporting terrorism to Kenya is very much real. As we have seen, al-Shabaab and, earlier, al-Itihaad al-Islami rebels established bases in Kenya and solicited support from fellow Somalis living there. Kenyan terrorists served as attackers in the 11 July 2010 bombings in Kampala. Kenyan authorities also arrested persons with links to al-Shabaab. Moreover, the Kenyan states' fight against terrorism is weakened by corrupt police officers and by non-existent (or non-enforced) anti-terror and money-laundering legislation. All the more remarkable is therefore the fact, that despite repeated threats, al-Shabaab did not commit terrorist attacks in Kenya so far. (The one that occurred was most probably a coincidence).

#### **4.1.1.3. Border clashes and incidents**

The other military inside out effect on Kenya is the insecurity in the border region to Somalia. Clashes on the Somali-Kenyan frontier are a relatively new phenomenon. In a frequent and threatening manner they have first raised concerns in 2007, when a series of violent incidents including attacks on Kenyan border troops occurred. In one instance for example, two Kenyan police officers on patrol were kidnapped along the border. Their mutilated bodies were found in a bush on the Somali side. Their firearms and uniforms were stolen.<sup>108</sup> Occasional attacks followed throughout 2008. In early March 2009, shortly after the formation of the TFG 2.0, al-Shabaab abducted four senior

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<sup>107</sup> Voice of America: „Police Searching for Answers After Nairobi Explosion”, 21 December 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Police-Searching-for-Answers-After-Nairobi-Explosion--112248174.html>

<sup>108</sup> Daily Nation: „Somali militants to try captive Kenya officials”, 25 March 2009, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/551002/-/u3nnom/-/index.html>

Kenyan education officers and their driver and held them for three days on a charge of crossing into Somalia without permission. They were abducted at Bula Hawo Town, a kilometer away from the border town of Mandera, where they had apparently gone shopping on the Somali side of the border. They were released after the local leaders intervened.

Stepping up the insecurity, on 26 May 2009 a Kenyan military helicopter was shot down along the Somali border, probably by al-Shabaab. Kenya's military denied reports that the military aircraft, which crashed during a routine patrol injuring four senior military officers including a colonel, was shot down by Somali rebels. A Department of Defense Spokesman said investigators had been sent to the site to determine the cause of the Hughes 500 helicopter crash [ARB 2009/05]. Military headquarters in Nairobi later claimed that the crash was caused by a mechanical problem.<sup>109</sup>

Next, during the night of 18 July 2009 three foreign aid workers were kidnapped in a Kenyan town close to the Somali border by armed men, who took them into Somalia. The workers were from the USA, Pakistan and Zimbabwe, and were working with the charity group, Action Against Hunger. Al-Shabaab later claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. In an interview the group's deputy leader, Ibrahim Ali Muhammad, said: "My troops invaded Kenya on Saturday night and managed to kidnap three aid workers and injured one security man and still we are not tired—we shall be back" [ARB 2009/07].

After a longer lull with only sporadic incidents, the next serious attack came in mid March 2010, when Kenyan forces in the border town of Mandera repelled the al-Shabaab, who crossed the border to steal a car belonging to a private bank.<sup>110</sup> A couple of days later, on 30 March, an al-Shabaab group has attacked an outpost housing Kenyan forces from General Service Unit - a paramilitary outfit - in Liboi, a remote town near the Kenya-Somalia border. The attack happened when a group of heavily armed al-Shabaab fighters opened fire on the officers, injuring several of them.

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<sup>109</sup> Daily Nation: „Military aircraft crash-lands near troubled Somalia border”, 26 May 2009, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/603386/-/view/printVersion/-/6pn4trz/-/index.html>

<sup>110</sup> Garowe Online: „Al-Shabaab fighters attack Kenyan forces at the border”, 2 April 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al-Shabaab\\_fighters\\_attack\\_Kenyan\\_forces\\_at\\_the\\_border.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al-Shabaab_fighters_attack_Kenyan_forces_at_the_border.shtml)

According to residents and police officials, who requested anonymity, the soldiers battled out with the attackers before pursuing them inside Somalia. "Al-Shabaab carried a planned incursion into Kenya, leading to the injuries of several Kenyan officers and Al-Shabaab fighters. We succeeded in repelling the attack," said a Kenyan officer.<sup>111</sup>

In mid-April, al-Shabaab attacked Liboi once again when heavily armed gunmen barricaded and attacked several positions in the city. The gunmen stormed two local hotels and a number of business premises during a two-hour raid. According to residents, the gunmen were not confronted by the Kenyan forces who were reportedly manning the border at the time.<sup>112</sup>

An even more serious incident occurred on 26 May 2010, when al-Shabaab shot and seriously injured five people after crossing the border to Kenya in Wajir district. Remarkably, the al-Shabaab fighters drove into Dadajabula village, 200km (!) south of Wajir town in North Eastern province, on two pick-up trucks at night and opened fire while the residents were asleep. Some reports from the area blamed cross border business rivalry for the attack while other claimed the al-Shabaab fighters targeted the family because its members are sympathetic to a rival rebel group, Hizbul Islam.<sup>113</sup> Another, minor incident happened in mid-July, a couple of days after the Kampala bombings, when a Kenyan security officer was ambushed by al-Shabaab militants during a patrol on the Kenyan-Somali border.<sup>114</sup>

Even this short and admittedly selective listing of cross-border clashes on the Somali-Kenyan frontier illustrates, that the situation in Somalia has clearly had a negative effect in Kenya, affecting the livelihoods and the delivery of services in the poorest region of the country. This opinion is shared by experts working in the area, as well as the affected population: "There is a direct effect of insecurity in Somalia for the

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<sup>111</sup> Garowe Online: „Al-Shabaab fighters attack Kenyan forces at the border”

<sup>112</sup> Daily Nation: „Somali Gunmen Attack Kenyan Border Town”, 16 April 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004161098.html>

<sup>113</sup> Daily Nation: „Somalia militia attack Kenya village”, 27 May 2010, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Somalia%20militia%20attack%20Kenya%20village/-/1056/926878/-/view/printVersion/-/703d7e/-/index.html>

<sup>114</sup> Voice of America: „Kenya: Al-Shabab Fires on Security Officers”, 20 July 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Kenya-Al-Shabab-Fires-on-Security-Officers-98843099.html>

humanitarian operations in northeast Kenya,’ said Patrick Lavand'homme, deputy head for Kenya of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. ‘One of these effects is that Somali rebels enter Kenyan territory. Messages and threats have been received by humanitarians about their own security from some of the Somali groups,’ he added, noting that as a result of these incursions and indigenous banditry and armed cattle rustling, the UN classifies the region as a phase-three security zone, ‘which means no [UN] movement can be done without armed escorts’.”<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the inhabitants of the border region fear insecurity as the rebels can turn up any time to rob and loot.<sup>116</sup> Insecurity in the borderlands has led thousands of livestock herders to abandon their traditional grazing land.<sup>117</sup> And some rebels, in connivance with Kenyan authorities, are also engaged in sugar-smuggling, depriving the Kenyan state of import duties.<sup>118</sup>

However, it is important to point out, that the border clashes between al-Shabaab and the Kenyan authorities mostly occur, well, along the border. Al-Shabaab has no intention (and no capability) to “invade” Northern Kenya. Its attacks are usually limited in time, and directed toward a specific person or goal. The rebels clearly do not want to provoke the Kenyan army to enter Somalia.<sup>119</sup> All in all, while being a major hassle, the border clashes are limited in space and scope, affecting the livelihood of only the people living in immediate vicinity of the border.

#### **4.1.1.4. Economy**

The economic and financial impact of the Somali civil war on Kenya is extremely difficult to estimate. As we have already seen, Kenya is confronted by a fair amount of challenges stemming from Somalia, which entail - to a varying degree - sizeable economic costs for Kenya: the housing and caring for the huge number of Somali refugees; the threat of a possible terrorist attack on Kenyan soil and the attention required from the security services to confront it; and cross border-clashes in the

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<sup>115</sup> IRIN News: „KENYA-SOMALIA: Insecurity without borders, 17 September 2010, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=90505>

<sup>116</sup> Personal interview, 2010 December, Nairobi.

<sup>117</sup> IRIN: „Insecurity without borders”, 17 September 2010, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=90505>

<sup>118</sup> Daily Nation: „Sugar and Arms Barons Rule Somali Border”, 29 May 2010, <http://www.somalipress.com/news/2010-may-30/sugar-and-arms-barons-rule-somali-border.html>

<sup>119</sup> Personal interview, 2010 December, Nairobi.

Northern Region, affecting the livelihoods, businesses and the delivery of services in the poorest region of the country, just to name a few. Because of these effects from Somalia, Kenya had to allocate funds to confront and mitigate the effect of these developments – money, in short, which could and should have been spent on other, more pressing things (e.g. education, health care, infrastructure).

On the other side, and perhaps more surprisingly, the Kenyan economy (and its consumers) are also apparently benefiting from the mayhem in Somalia. Many Somali traders and businessmen have left the country since 1991 and moved to Nairobi (and, to a lesser extent, to other Kenyan cities). In Nairobi, most Somali business activities are centered in the Eastleigh neighborhood, which was traditionally inhabited by Kenyan-Somalis. In some respects the vigorous unregulated economy that flourished inside Somalia after the collapse of the state has been exported to Kenya. The economic transformation of Eastleigh has brought a new level of competition to Nairobi, substantially reducing the cost of goods and services. Growing Somali investment in Nairobi has also attracted banks and other service-providers, demonstrating that urban refugees are not necessarily a burden on the state and can be an economic asset [Abdulsamed 2010: 3].

Somalis in Kenya are active in a wide range of economic sectors. Traditionally, there has always been a sizeable and active cross-border trade between the two countries, mainly in livestock, primarily cattle. Ironically, this cross-border trade grew stronger after the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. Cattles imported from Somalia have at one point supplied 16% of the meat demand of Nairobi [Little 2003: 98]. In the last couple of years, Somalis and Kenyan-Somalis have strengthened the existing trade networks in the livestock trade, while managing to develop new businesses in response to the growing economic opportunities.

One example for Somali investment in Kenya is the transport sector. Somali operators (both Somalis and Kenyan-Somalis) have established direct bus lines such as E-couch, Maslah, Crown and Garissa Bus. Moreover, in the last 17 years, more than ten Somali trucking companies have been established in Kenya. With an initial capital investment of around \$5 million each, these now show substantial annual profits of around \$20

million. Leading companies such as Awale, Tipper Freighters, Dakawe and Ainu-Shamsi Transporters operate hundreds of trucks each day. There are also many individually owned and run truck companies operating with two to six trucks, and this growing sector plays a very significant role in Kenyan transport market [Abdulsamed 2010: 8]. Fuel supply is another expanding sector and the number of Somali-owned fuel stations in Kenya appears to be increasing exponentially; it rose from four stations in 2002 to 56 in 2009 [Abdulsamed 2010: 10].

Sugar smuggling has also become big business in recent years. The sugar comes from Brazil or Pakistan via Dubai, enters Somalia through Kismayo, Mogadishu and Bosasoo ports for onward transit to Kenya where the kingpins reportedly have go-downs in major towns. The barons pay the Somali warlords through whose areas the imports pass a protection fee estimated at Sh100,000 per trip. Locally milled sugar sells for up to KSh110 a kilo whereas the smuggled sugar goes for as low as KSh60 a kilo. “Sources privy to the smuggling told the Sunday Nation that those found transporting 200-50kg bags of sugar grease the palms of senior [Kenyan] security officials with at least Sh50,000 whereas those trafficking 100 bags part with a minimum Sh25,000.”<sup>120</sup> The net result for the Kenyan consumers is lower sugar prices. The Kenyan state, however, foregoes import duties.

Even more important than sugar-smuggling has been in recent years the Somali investment in the Kenyan real estate and construction sector, which, thanks in part to the contribution of Somalis, has risen by 14% between 2008 and 2009 [GTAI 2010a]. A report by the Central Bank of Kenya indicates that investment in real estate residential sector grew to KSh61 billion as of May 2010, compared to KSh19 billion five years ago. “In addition, the number of actual mortgages taken up by individuals and organizations, without putting the figures loaned, grew from 7,834 to 13,803 over the same period, a demonstration of the great potential and growing interest in the sector.”<sup>121</sup> It is no surprise then that some Kenyan property dealers claim that prices have tripled in areas where Somalis dominate, such as Eastleigh. In the words of a

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<sup>120</sup> Daily Nation: „Sugar and Arms Barons Rule Somali Border”

<sup>121</sup> The Standard: „Bubbling real estate sector draws keen investor interest”, 15 November 2010, <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000022516&cid=14>



Kenyan real estate appraiser: “We are seeing a situation or experiencing a situation where property that was once worth four million shillings is now worth eight, nine, even 10 [million] and they are buying.”<sup>122</sup>

Perhaps the most visible manifestation of Somali real-estate investment in Nairobi are two huge hopping malls, which have been built in the district (named Amal and Eastleigh). The latter contains a hotel, a bank, restaurants, cafeterias, a supermarket, a gym, a college, a travel agent, an FM radio station and a number of shops, and was extremely busy at a visit in November 2010.

All this begs an important question: what is the source of the invested money? “Many Kenyans believe that there is a strong relationship between Somali investors and the pirates and warlords of Somalia. While the Kenyan media have produced some wildly exaggerated reports, there are certainly some properties owned by pirates and warlords in Nairobi and Mombasa.”<sup>123</sup> Kenya’s weak anti-money-laundering legislation (see below) and enforcement make Nairobi an attractive destination for illegal money. Government spokesman Alfred Mutua even alleged that there is a direct connection between what is happening on the Somali high seas and the price increases of property being purchased by those he calls “foreigners.” “They are coming and they are buying the property at any price,” said Mutua. “So, they are coming to a person and asking them, ‘How much is this piece of land?’ The person says, ‘Oh, I am sorry, this piece of land or this building is already sold for \$50,000,’ and then they say, ‘OK, we will give you double and we will pay cash.’”<sup>124</sup>

But in reality the value of Somali trade and investment in Kenya is much larger than the proceeds of piracy. Anecdotal evidence points to investments of over \$1.5 billion in Eastleigh in 2004. Ransoms in 2009 were estimated at around \$100 million [Abdulsamed 2010: 10]. A well-informed source and long-standing Nairobi citizen also thinks that the contribution of piracy-related monies to the recent property boom in

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<sup>122</sup> Voice of America: „Kenyan Government Investigates Possible Pirate Ties to Real Estate Boom”, 21 May 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Kenyan-Government-Investigates-Possible-Pirate-Ties-to-Real-Estate-Boom-94607164.html>

<sup>123</sup> Abdulsamed 2010: 10.

<sup>124</sup> Voice of America: „Kenyan Government Investigates Possible Pirate Ties to Real Estate Boom”



Nairobi is wildly exaggerated. "Ransom money is certainly one of the factors behind the rocketing prices, but definitely cannot explain the boom on its own."<sup>125</sup>

Faced with a huge influx of apparently illegally gained ransom money, the Kenyan parliament has been surprisingly timid in countering the problem. As mentioned above, the US government has repeatedly urged its Kenyan counterpart to enact a comprehensive anti money-laundering bill, to no avail. The reason for this, all interview partners agreed, is the fact that the Kenyan state did not want to interrupt the flourishing business activity enabled by the influx of illegal money.<sup>126</sup> Only in December 2009, several years after the flow of piracy-related money was registered as a problem, did the Kenyan parliament finally pass the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Bill. It was the fourth attempt since 2004 to pass this bill. Some analysts, however, fretted that it may just be a gimmick by the government to appease international partners. George Kegoro, the executive director of International Commission of Jurists - Kenya Chapter, for example doubted that there is political will to completely stamp out money laundering in Kenya. "The existence of the legislation is not sufficient to deter the vice neither are the stiff penalties that are recommended in the bill," he says. "There is need for genuine support from the government to enact this law. We need a good set of people to be put in place to interpret the legislation."<sup>127</sup>

The law finally took effect on 28 June 2010, and is aimed at sealing existing loopholes in Kenya. The Act provides for the 'freezing, seizure and confiscation of proceeds of crime.' While in the past the verification of sources of funds infused into the formal financial system was not mandatory, the Act seeks to change this. It requires forex bureaus and other money transfer and financial institutions to be vigilant, identify customers and report any transaction of more than US\$10,000 (Kshs 810,000) in hard currency. As of March 2011, however, the law was still not operational. According to Anne Kiuhune, audit and fiscal and financial laws expert, "the various agencies under the Act required for its proper implementation are yet to be set up and there is no indication on when the Government intends to do so. These include the Reporting

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<sup>125</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>126</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>127</sup> IPS: „Anti-Money Laundering Bill Passes, But Does Govt Mean Business?“, 29, December 2009, <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=49841>

Centre, the Assets Recovery Agency, the Anti-Money Laundering Advisory Board and the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund.”<sup>128</sup>

Another important socio-economic factor of the recent success of Somali businessmen (be they recent migrants or longstanding citizens) is the fact that it has created occasional resentment among local Kenyans. According to Deborah Osiro, a Kenyan researcher with the Institute for Security Studies, Eastleigh became the fastest growing and one of the most thriving neighborhoods in Nairobi and that is annoying Kenyans, who are trying to maintain their commercial and economic footholds but are unable to do so. “They see the Somalis pricing them out of the lower or middle-income real estate market and wonder how refugees can be doing better financially than their hosts. Of course there are deeper influences at play here, but it's easy to blame the stranger - something that seems entirely new for Kenya.”<sup>129</sup> The success of the Somalis has obviously prompted jealousy and business rivalry from non-Somali business operators, some going as far as to say that “they would like nothing else than to see the Somalis' expansion curtailed.”<sup>130</sup> There was even talk of a law to would have restricted the sale of properties to “foreigners”.<sup>131</sup> Critics cite the absence of public clinics and the low number of state-run schools in Eastleigh as proof of the discrimination of the Somalis by the Kenyan state.

The often heavy-handed approach of the Kenyan security services towards Somalis or Kenyan-Somalis illustrates this fact. When in January 2010 Somali youth demonstrated against the deportation of the Jamaican-born cleric Abdullah Al-Faisal, hundreds of Somalis and Somali-looking persons were arrested indiscriminately. Hassan Guleid, the chairman of Eastleigh District Business Association, accused the government of victimization and harassment of the Somali community. “In the past week the security forces have arrested thousands of people of Somali ethnicity across the country

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<sup>128</sup> The Standard: „Why it is business as usual for crooks even with ‘tough’ law”, 4 March 2011, <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/specialreports/InsidePage.php?id=2000030473&cid=259&story=Why%20it%20is%20business%20as%20usual%20for%20crooks%20even%20with%20%91tough%92%20law>

<sup>129</sup> IRIN News: „Raids and rancour”, 27 January 2010, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=87891>

<sup>130</sup> IRIN News: „Raids and rancour”

<sup>131</sup> Reuters: „Kenya says Muslim cleric to be deported in two days”, 18 January 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/01/18/us-kenya-muslims-idUSTRE60H2YZ20100118>

ostensibly to flush out illegal immigrants in the country," Mr Guleid said. He added that profiling of Somali people's investments in the country ordered by Office of the President permanent secretary Francis Kimemia was a pointer to the fact that the government had ill intentions.<sup>132</sup>

For the Kenyan employees and consumers, however, the growth of Somali business in Nairobi is mainly beneficial. Somali money has attracted banks and other service-providers, and led them to open branches in Eastleigh, thus creating more jobs for Kenyans. Somali-owned businesses have also created jobs for local unskilled workers. It was found that Somali employers tended to pay more for similar work – roughly KSh 150–250 a day compared with the average KSh 80–100. Given the amount of capital invested in the areas, many Kenyan residents of the Eastlands area of Nairobi increasingly turn towards Eastleigh to earn a living. [Abdulsamed 2010: 12].

Kenyan consumers also profit from the business boom in Eastleigh. Up-scale brands of fashion, electronics and other consumer items can be purchased at 20 to 30 percent below process elsewhere in town and services, such as internet and phone, can be obtained at a fraction of normal costs. One minute of online time, for example, costs about \$0.04, while an international phone call to the USA is as low as \$1.00 per minute, compared to \$3.00 by normal means [Little 2003: 165].

Overall, it is clear to see, that the Kenyan economy (and the consumers) are very much profiting from the business activity of the Somalis in the country. It is of course close to impossible to estimate how much of this activity can be traced to the state failure in Somalia. Would the thousands of Somali businessmen who have relocated to Kenya have left their country even if the Somali state had not collapsed? It is perhaps fair to argue, that most of them would have probably stayed put in Somalia, depriving Kenya of sizeable business activity.

Another important and overlooked aspect is the fact, that the Kenyan economy on the whole is increasingly discovering Somalia as an export market. According to the World Bank, during the years 1992-2000 Somalia was not among the top 10 destinations for

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<sup>132</sup> Daily Nation: „Eastleigh traders protest over crackdown”, 22 January 2010, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/847724/-/view/printVersion/-/csx7t7z/-/index.html>

Kenyan export.<sup>133</sup> Between 200 and 2009, however, Somalia moved to tenth position for Kenyan export destinations, with an export volume of about \$100 million a year.<sup>134</sup> Most of this trade is probably conducted by Kenyan-Somalis or Somalis living in Kenya.

This all is of course not to say that the state failure in Somalia does not affect the Kenyan economy in a negative way. As we have already argued, the state failure in Somalia entails sizeable economic costs for Kenya. There is also the issue of illegal money flooding the country, providing ample scope for corruption. Theory suggests that the influx of huge sums of money also drives up property prices and, therefore, inflation. Kenyan industrialists warned in December 2010 that the increased risk because of piracy attacks “has pushed up freight and insurance costs of shipping raw materials - which must be ultimately be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher retail prices.”<sup>135</sup> The numbers, however, do not bear this out: inflation slowed from 26,2 % in 2008 to 9,2 in 2009 and then to 4,2 in 2010.<sup>136</sup>

Similarly, Kenyan GDP growth does not seem to be very much influenced by events in Somalia. In the recent most peaceful year in Somalia (2006), the Kenyan economy grew slower than in the next year (2007), which saw heavy fighting there and an influx of refugees from Somalia. The drop in 2008 can be attributed to domestic factors (the ethnic clashes in the wake of the 2007 elections).

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP growth (in %)	0.5	2.9	5.1	5.9	6.3	7.0	1.6	2.6	4.9 <sup>137</sup>

**Table 4: Kenya’s GDP growth 2002-2010**

(Source: World Bank 2011b)

Tourism, a mainstay of Kenyan economy, also held up well during the violent periods in neighboring Somalia. After a 18 % drop in tourism revenue in 2008 due to the violence after the 2007 domestic elections, 2009 turned out to be a strong year for the

<sup>133</sup> World Bank 2011a: 14.

<sup>134</sup> World Bank 2011a: 14.

<sup>135</sup> The Citizen: „Somali Piracy Raises Costs of Imports”, 8 December 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201012090352.html>

<sup>136</sup> World Bank 2011c and CIA World Factbook.

<sup>137</sup> World Bank 2011b.

sector with 952,481 arrivals.<sup>138</sup> 2010 saw a record year for Kenyan tourism, with almost 1,1 million arrivals. This was 4,5 % more than the previous record set in 2007.<sup>139</sup> Just as in the case of the GDP growth, the ebbing and flowing of the violence in Somalia seems to have only a limited effect on the numbers, if at all. Domestic factors, such as the post-election crisis in 2007-2008 had a much greater impact on tourist arrivals.

Overall, just as in the case of benefits, it is very difficult to give an estimate of the size of the costs for the Kenyan economy. Several experts asked about this question refused to make even a wild guess.<sup>140</sup> All in all, however, in the light of the data, the costs do not seem to be huge. To argue counterfactual, the detailed biannual Economic Updates of Kenya from the World Bank do not even mention Somalia as a negative factor at all.<sup>141</sup> Most - though not all - regional experts also opined that the economic benefits of the state failure in Somalia for Kenya are not outweighed by the costs.<sup>142</sup>

#### **4.1.2. Outside-in effects**

##### **4.1.2.1. Training of Somali troops**

According to the model of Lambach, countries neighboring a failed state also try influence the situation there (“outside-in effects”). This is exactly what Kenya is doing. Perhaps the most tangible effort on part of Kenya to influence the situation in Somalia was the training of Somali youth on Kenyan territory. The youth, once trained and sent back to Somalia, were supposed to support the TFG in Somalia.

In the last couple of years, several countries (Uganda, Ethiopia, France, USA) have trained Somali government troops.<sup>143</sup> These ad-hoc and uncoordinated training missions were beset with several problems, as pointed out by Amnesty International:

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<sup>138</sup> Kenyan Ministry of Tourism: “Tourism Performance Overview 2010”, s.a., [http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts\\_figures](http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts_figures)

<sup>139</sup> Kenyan Ministry of Tourism: “Tourism Performance Overview 2010

<sup>140</sup> Personal interviews, November-December 2010, Nairobi and Mombasa.

<sup>141</sup> World Bank 2010a, World Bank 2010b, World Bank 2011a.

<sup>142</sup> Personal interviews, November-December 2010, Nairobi and Mombasa

<sup>143</sup> For an overview, see: Amnesty International [2010b]: Somalia: International Military and Policing Assistance should be reviewed, 2010, London: Amnesty International, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR52/001/2010/en/86225a8e-1db3-427c-a2ca-03adbf632e87/afr520012010en.pdf>

- “weapons and ammunition were transferred to Somalia’s TFG without adequate safeguards to ensure that they will not be used in committing human rights abuses;
- training was provided to the TFG security forces without these being subjected to adequate vetting and oversight procedures;
- some of the training was planned without proper notification to the UN Sanctions Committee, therefore undermining the UN arms embargo on Somalia;
- no adequate training was provided in international human rights and humanitarian law.”<sup>144</sup>

Despite the aforementioned problems and the obvious costs associated with a training mission in terms of funds, facilities and human resources (e.g. trainers), Kenya decided in October 2008 to begin training up to 10,000 Somali troops. In apparent confusion, Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetangula announced the decision at an African ambassadors meeting at the Serena Hotel, Nairobi, in the presence of the press, seriously undermining the credibility of later denials of the existence of the mission (see below).<sup>145</sup>

After a long period of silence, Kenyan Foreign Minister Moses Wetang’ula told visiting foreign envoys in July 2009, that the authorities in Nairobi were ready to assist the Somali government to get back on its feet and would not compromise with other radical groups in the Horn of Africa nation. He said that the Kenyan government had made “available” the Manyani Wildlife Training School to be used to train the Somali police force, suggesting implicitly, that Kenya was only providing the training facilities [ARB 2009/07].

In fact, Kenya itself was organizing and executing the whole process from recruitment to training, as became apparent by a string of press reports in October 2009. Garowe Online was the first in the line to write on 8 October, that “Ethnic Somalis who live in a vast territory in northeastern Kenya are being recruited in big numbers, with the military recruitment process reportedly taking place in the Kenyan towns of Wajer, Garissa and

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<sup>144</sup> Amnesty International 2010b: 5.

<sup>145</sup> Shabelle: „Kenyan Army to Train Up to 10,000 Somali Troops”, 9 October 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200810100272.html>

Mandera, according to various sources. Hundreds of young ethnic Somali-Kenyans are joining the Kenyan army after promises of a \$600-per month salary and six months of military training, local sources said. "My parents refused that I sign up, but I signed up and joined the army, not because I want to go to Somalia to fight, but because the pay is good," said a young Somali Kenyan in Garissa town who declined to be named in print. Garissa Mayor Mohamud Gabow told reporters that "300 recruits" from Garissa have been taken to military camps in other parts of Kenya after promises of salary."<sup>146</sup>

Kenyan military spokesman Bogita Ongeru subsequently denied the existence of the training mission, and called it "propaganda", a pattern which was to be repeated several times throughout October, signaling a lack of coordination among Kenyan authorities.<sup>147</sup> If no other than the Foreign Minister announced plans to train Somali forces, what use was there to deny it, one might ask.

The answer came a couple of days later. Having received information about the training camp, Hizbul Islam spokesman Sheikh Mohamed Moalim Ali, while refraining from issuing a direct threat, called the process "ill-motivated" and tantamount to "targeting the Mujahideen."<sup>148</sup> Obviously, Kenya wanted to keep the whole training process as low-key as possible, in order not to provoke al-Shabaab into attacking Kenya in retaliation. To hide the whole activity of recruiting and training hundreds of Somali youth not far away from the Somali border was, of course, almost impossible, and, predictably, the Kenyan authorities failed to keep the secret before al-Shabaab or the Kenyan press. However, in a desperate attempt, Kenyan officials kept trying to deny the existence of the training no matter what.

Signaling the uncoordinated nature of the whole exercise, the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Foreign Relations even took up the matter to investigate who in the government authorized the recruitment exercise. The last doubt was removed over the whole affair, when Somali Prime Minister Ali Sharmarke clearly stated that Kenya government is training hundreds of Somali youth in northeastern Kenya [Africa

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<sup>146</sup> Garowe Online: „Controversy Over 'Recruiting Somalis' to Fight", 8 October 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910080918.html>

<sup>147</sup> Garowe Online: „Controversy Over 'Recruiting Somalis' to Fight",

<sup>148</sup> Daily Nation: „Somali rebels join accusations against Kenya", 12 October 2009, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/671392/-/135r4emz/-/index.html>



Research Bulletin 2009/10]. Predictably, a couple of months later al-Shabaab declared holy war on Kenya because of the training mission: „Kenya has prepared troops that comprise of Kenyans and Somalis, who are trained to attack and take over the regions. They are planning to attack us on the land, sea and air. We are urging people to be ready and defend our land” – said Sheikh Hussen Abdi Gedi, Al-Shabaab’s second in command.<sup>149</sup>

Once the whole story became common knowledge, critics of the exercise pointed out several dangers in the training mission. Horn of Africa analyst for the International Crisis Group, Rashid Abdi said that Kenya’s decision to become directly involved in the conflict was “foolish.” “It is a potentially disastrous policy that will backfire spectacularly,” he said. “Kenya has traditionally been a neutral arbiter in the conflict and has avoided taking an interventionist approach like Ethiopia. This was a far better stance than what we are seeing now.” Mr Abdi said the danger was that the youths being recruited to fight in Somalia would return, having acquired military skills but with no obvious alternative forms of employment into which to channel their skills. Some could also defect to fight with Al Shabaab, he said, due to the fluid nature of the Somalia conflict. Such recruits into the ranks of the Al Shabaab would pose a serious threat to the country, he said.”<sup>150</sup> Hassan Ole Naado, CEO of the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance also warned against the training mission and called to stop it.<sup>151</sup> Critics also pointed to the fact that the recruits were primarily from the Ogaden clan who are the dominant community in the area near the Kenya-Somalia border and that the conflict might spill over into Kenya because members of the Ogaden clan are found in both Somalia and Kenya.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia: Al-Shabaab declares jihad on Kenya”, 7 February 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al-Shabaab\\_declares\\_jihad\\_on\\_Kenya.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al-Shabaab_declares_jihad_on_Kenya.shtml)

<sup>150</sup> Daily Nation: „Kenya warned against courting militia”, 14 Nov 2009, <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/686426/-/view/printVersion/-/bbyoq6/-/index.html>

<sup>151</sup> Daily Nation: „Kenya must shun Somali conflict”, 13 October 2009, <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/-/440808/671896/-/view/printVersion/-/10wmlml/-/index.html>

<sup>152</sup> Daily Nation: „Government readies troops for Al Shabaab assault”, 28 March 2010, <http://www.afrika.no/Detailed/19451.html>



Further light was shed on the background of the training by the UN Monitoring Group Report issued in March 2010. According to the thorough investigation of the Group, the training program was initiated at the request of Somali President Sharif and under the auspices of his then Minister of Defence, Mohamed Abdi Mohamed “Gandhi”, with Ethiopia being closely involved. Approximately 2,500 youth were recruited by clan elders and commissioned agents, both from within Somalia (exclusively the Juba Valley and, henceforth, mostly Ogadenis) and north-eastern Kenya, including the Dadaab refugee camps. Two training centres were established, one at the Kenya Wildlife Service training camp at Manyani, the other near Archer’s Post at Isiolo. A total of 36 Somali officers were recruited to assist in the training. The officers assembled at Manyani in August and completed a one-month seminar in September 2009. Despite official claims of recruitment on the basis of a national “4.5 formula”, Monitoring Group investigations confirmed that the greatest numbers of recruits are from the Ogaden clan, with the Marehaan in second place. This has reportedly engendered some anxiety among other clan groups along both sides of the common border. The Monitoring Group also noted that Kenya had not notified the Security Council about the training mission. In a reply to a Monitoring Group query on this subject in February 2010, the Government of Kenya denied that it has provided training for Somali troops. [UN 2010a: 56].

Further substantial problems arose once the training was finished, as the three states involved in the training, (Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia) couldn’t agree where to deploy the troops. “While the Kenyan security forces wanted to have the youths deployed in the southern Somali regions of Juba and Gedo to create a buffer zone with the al-Shabaab, Ethiopia and the TFG wanted them to be sent to Mogadishu to help repulse al-Shabaab who have taken control of large parts of the capital.”<sup>153</sup> Kenya rejected the request, fearing that moving the troops to Mogadishu would leave Kenya's border area vulnerable to incursions by al-Shabaab. Ethiopia also feared the deployment of the contingent in Ogaden might bolster and give the Ogaden National Liberation Front (an Ethiopian rebel group fighting against the government) a launching pad for its attacks against Ethiopia. The matter was further complicated by the fact that in the meantime

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<sup>153</sup> Nairobi Star: „Nation Stuck With Somali 'Mercenaries'”, 19 March 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201003191005.html>

President Sheikh Sharif fell out with his Defence Minister Mohamed “Ghandi”, an Ogadeni, whom he suspected of pushing for the deployment of the youths in Juba and Gedo to not only fight the al-Shabaab but also lay the foundation for the establishment of an Ogaden autonomous region.

Another reason for the failure of the training mission was, according to an expert, infighting among the Kenyan authorities with regards to the exercise. Apparently, the Kenyan National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS), which is close to Ethiopia, has not supported the training all along and worked to undermine it. Echoing the fears coming from Addis Ababa, the NSIS fretted that the Ogadeni recruits might use their skills to harm Ethiopia. The whole mission was the brainchild of the Defense Ministry, without the support of other organs of the state, according to the expert.<sup>154</sup>

All this bickering had as a result that the recruits were not sent back to Somalia once their training was finished, making the whole exercise useless.<sup>155</sup> Kenya basically spent considerable time and money on a training mission which failed to produce any benefits. The only result was that the country moved into the limelight of al-Shabaab’s attention for training pro-TFG-troops. In effect, because of the botched training mission, Kenya lost its stature as a neutral arbiter in Somali affairs; the whole exercise only brought unwelcome attention and made the country a potential site of attacks for al-Shabaab.

#### **4.1.2.2. Diplomatic support for the TFG**

The other way in which Kenya tries to shape the situation in Somalia in line with its own interests is diplomacy. All along, Kenya has been one of the strongest backer of the TFG 1.0 and 2.0. What is more, Kenya, which was worried about the situation in Somalia, hosted the peace conference which led to the formation of the TFG 1.0 in 2004. Ever since, Nairobi is among the strongest diplomatic backers of the TFG.

According to two scholars, however, Kenya was less than diplomatic in shaping the outcome of the peace conference it hosted in 2004. “With respect to the peace conference in Kenya, Ethiopia initiated this peace process and has controlled it for two

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<sup>154</sup> Personal interview, November 2010, Nairobi.

<sup>155</sup> Personal interview, November 2010, Nairobi.

years with the help of Kenya...At the beginning of this conference Ethiopia started to manipulate the peace process by controlling the agenda and forum. With the help of the host country Ethiopia gave absolute power to the warlords it supported. Ethiopia and Kenya have also marginalised traditional, religious and civil society leaders.”<sup>156</sup> In short, the strong Ethiopian and Kenyan influence under which the TFG came to life greatly reduced its legitimacy.<sup>157</sup> As the new government remained largely ineffective in the coming years, the flawed construction of the TFG was only a pyrrhic victory for its creators, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Nevertheless, Nairobi kept on supporting the TFG 1.0, especially in the face of the Islamic Courts. Kenya strongly favored the establishment of the IGASOM peacekeeping force, which was supposed to keep the ICU in check.<sup>158</sup> During the days after the Ethiopian attack on the ICU, Kenya sealed its border, “refusing to allow any traffic in either direction. Some of the Islamists sought to cross nonetheless, and were arrested along with hundreds of refugees seeking shelter in Kenya. In yet another controversial move, Kenyan authorities took part in a secret detention and rendition operation with Ethiopian and US officials in which at least 85 people were returned to the TFG’s custody in Somalia, who turned them over to Ethiopian authorities.”<sup>159</sup>

During the years of the Ethiopian occupation, Kenya remained a steadfast supporter of the TFG 1.0. However, as the months passed by, Nairobi became increasingly frustrated by the ineffectiveness of Abdullahi Yusuf’s government. Under Kenyan and Ethiopian pressure, Yusuf finally had to resign in December 2008.<sup>160</sup> The new TFG 2.0 was greeted warmly in Nairobi, which was the first stop of the new President’s, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed’s first foreign trip. Kenyan President Kibaki reportedly urged his Somali counterpart to reach out to all power groups in the country and to include them in his government.<sup>161</sup> Kenyan Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula reiterated this demand to the visiting Somali Prime Minister Ali Shermarke in May 2009 [Africa Research

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<sup>156</sup> Elmi-Barise 2006:42.

<sup>157</sup> Menkhaus 2007b 359-364.

<sup>158</sup> Shinn 2006: 2.

<sup>159</sup> Menkhaus 2007b: 381.

<sup>160</sup> Menkhaus 2009: 2.

<sup>161</sup> Shabelle: „Kibaki urges Somalis to forge unity”, 10 March 2009

Bulletin 2009/05]. Showing the importance of Kenya for Somalia, several other high-level visits followed in the next months.

In line with its close ally Ethiopia, Kenya also constantly supported the expansion of AMISOM.<sup>162</sup> (As a neighboring country, Kenya is prohibited from sending troops, although there were occasional mutterings to the contrary).<sup>163</sup> After the 11 July bombing in Kampala, Nairobi, in line with Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia and other African states, once again called for the upgrading of AMISOM. Showing the anxiousness prevailing in Nairobi, Foreign Minister Wetangula even proposed “an international task force, with UN and European Union officials, and a large African unit representing all Somalia’s neighbours, with TFG, Somaliland, and Puntland involvement.”<sup>164</sup> The aim would have been to shore up an effective government in Mogadishu with support from the clans and key power-brokers which could carry out the agreed transitional program.

At the UN in September 2010, Wetangula once again said that Somalia posed a direct threat to his country and that AMISOM should be increased to 22,000 troops from its authorized strength of 8,100.<sup>165</sup> A couple of days later the Minister criticized in strong terms the “perceived reluctance of the United Nations Security Council to engage with Somalia”, which “has been a matter of great concern for those of us who suffer the greatest consequences of the conflict...Unfortunately, the support...by the international community has not been forthcoming” Wetangula said.<sup>166</sup>

The Minister also opined that the millions being spent to fight pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia should be spent instead on helping the country become a functioning state. In an interview he said, that “piracy is not born at sea. It's born on land. And if you are able to patrol and protect your coastline, it's unlikely that pirates will find a way

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<sup>162</sup> See for example: Reuters: „Somali rebels unite, profess loyalty to al Qaeda”, 1 February 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE6100F920100201>

<sup>163</sup> Garowe Online: „Kenya considers deploying troops to Somalia: FM”, 2 February 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Kenya\\_considers\\_deploying\\_troops\\_to\\_Somalia\\_FM.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Kenya_considers_deploying_troops_to_Somalia_FM.shtml)

<sup>164</sup> Africa Confidential 50/16.

<sup>165</sup> East African: „Al-Shabaab a Threat to East African Countries”, 17 September 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201009200004.html>

<sup>166</sup> UN News Service: „Kenya calls on Security Council to pay greater attention to conflict in Somalia”, 23 September 2010, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36096>

to the high seas to cause the menace ... Instead, what are we seeing? 52 warships patrolling ... the waters of the Indian Ocean, but piracy is still going on.”<sup>167</sup> He also expressed support for the TFG, saying that "if the government was given the capacity to strengthen its ability to fight back, I would have no doubt that al-Shabab can be defeated in a very short time. Those with the money don't seem to open their envelopes to Somalia, or to the cause of Somalia.”<sup>168</sup>

Overall, the reasons for Kenya’s support for the TFG are clear. It wants a stable, efficient and Kenya-friendly government in Somalia, which is at the same time moderate. A radical Islamist regime in Somalia would be utterly unacceptable for Nairobi.<sup>169</sup> In line with its main ally Ethiopia, it has invested considerable diplomatic capital in the TFG, so it wants to see it succeed. This would also bolster the country’s regional and international stature.

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<sup>167</sup> AP: „Kenya Says West Wasting Money on Anti-Piracy Ships”, 26 September 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=11727651>

<sup>168</sup> AP: „Kenya Says West Wasting Money on Anti-Piracy Ships”, 26 September 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=11727651>

<sup>169</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, 2010 November.

## **4.2 Eritrea**

### **4.2.1 Inside-out effects**

Although both countries are undoubtedly members of the East African RSC, at first glance there aren't many issues which seem to connect Eritrea and Somalia. The most important factor linking tiny Eritrea to the East African RSC is its deep animosity towards Ethiopia, with whom it fought a bloody war in 1998-2000 (see below). Being on bad terms with Ethiopia determines Eritrea's foreign policy deeply, and shapes its behavior towards Somalia fundamentally. In fact this chapter can be succinctly summarized in a short statement: Eritrea's engagement in Somalia serves to weaken Ethiopia.

Speaking about the inside-out effects of Somalia's state failure on Eritrea is easy, because it is basically unaffected by them. It has no border with Somalia, therefore it has no Somali refugees to host and support. Its rudimentary economy is mostly unaffected by the conflict in Somalia, as it had no significant economic relations with, or interests in, Somalia. Although, at one stage, Eritrea primarily supported its rival, Hizbul Islam, it is highly unlikely that al-Shabaab would stage a terrorist attack in Eritrea, especially since Asmara supplied arms and ammunition to al-Shabaab as well. There is, as of yet, no sign, that Somali Islamist movements would inspire similar movements in Eritrea. In short, Eritrea is in an advantageous position: it can engage itself in Somalia more or less freely without feeling immediate negative repercussions.

### **4.2.2. Outside-in effects**

#### **4.2.2.1. Military assistance and training for anti-Ethiopian factions**

##### **1999 – 2006: Prior to the Ethiopian occupation**

Traditionally, the most important way in which Eritrea tried to influence the situation in Somalia was the support of anti-Ethiopian factions in Somalia. This usually meant the transfer of arms, ammunition and money to the anti-Ethiopian groupings of the day, and Asmara, on at least one occasion, also organized a training camp for al-Shabaab. There are also reports of Eritrean army officers functioning as trainers in Somalia. But to

understand Eritrea's role better, it is worth looking briefly at the history of its engagement in Somalia.

The beginning of Eritrea's engagement in Somali affairs can be traced back to 1999, shortly after the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia broke out. It can be persuasively argued, that the most important reasons for the start of Eritrea's operations in Somalia was to strengthen the anti-Ethiopia factions, and, consequently, to weaken and detract Ethiopia itself.<sup>170</sup> From the beginning, Eritrea followed a two-pronged strategy: apart from supporting anti-Ethiopian elements (the ICU, al-Shabaab, warlords), it also provided weapons and ammunition to Ethiopian rebels located in Somalia, particularly the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).<sup>171</sup> The very first United Nations Monitoring Group Report from 2002 lists several Eritrean arms shipment to the OLF in Somalia and to Hussein Mohamed Aideed, an anti-Ethiopian Somali warlord [UN 2002: 20-21]. Subsequent reports show, that Eritrea continued this policy even after the signing of the Algiers Agreement with Ethiopia in December 2000, which stipulated a ceasefire between the two countries [UN 2003a: 24; UN 2003b: 5]. Eritrea also sent arms to al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI), a now defunct Islamist group, which conducted terrorist attacks in Ethiopia in the 90s [UN 2006a: 11-12].

Around 2005-2006 Eritrea, sensing the strength of the emerging ICU, realized the opportunity in supporting the new movement. In the following months, ICU became Eritrea's most significant and effective asset in Somalia [Reid 2009: 39]. The first shipments of weapons and ammunition destined for the ICU arrived in Mogadishu in March 2006. The shipment was massive, so it is worth looking at the details:

- 200 boxes of Zu-23 ammunition (anti-aircraft);
- 200 boxes of B-10 ammunition (anti-tank);

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<sup>170</sup> Mengisteab 2007: 65., Lyons 2006: 16-17.

<sup>171</sup> The OLF fights against the Ethiopian government because of the perceived marginalization of the Oromo ethnic group living in the south of the country. The ONLF group consists mainly of Ethiopian Somalis, who live in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Goal of the ONLF is to secede from Ethiopia. Time and again, the rebel groups found refuge in the ungoverned areas of Somalia, where they could rest and regroup for subsequent attacks. In Somalia, the rebel groups sometimes cooperated with the enemies of Ethiopia, primarily the ICU and Eritrea. On occasions, they received military supplies by Eritrea, see for example: UN 2002: 20-21.

- 200 boxes of DShK ammunition (anti-aircraft);
- 200 boxes of Browning M2 .50 ammunition (heavy machine gun);
- Ammunition for ZP-39 (anti-aircraft);
- 50 rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers and boxes of ammunition (anti-tank);
- 50 light anti-armour weapons;
- 50 M-79 grenade launchers;
- Communications equipment to be mounted on technicals [UN 2006a: 12].

Only two days later, on 5 March 2006, there arrived another huge shipment, details of which are as follows:

- 1,000 AK-47 (short version);
- 1,000 pairs of binoculars;
- 1,000 remote-control bombs;
- 1,000 anti-personnel mines;
- Ammunition for 120mm mortars [UN 2006a: 12-13].

Perhaps not coincidentally, the ICU was at the height of its power exactly in the months following these massive shipments, firmly controlling Mogadishu and invading much of Somalia during the course of 2006. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the Eritrean weapons shipment played an important role in the military success of the Islamists.

### **2006-2009: During the Ethiopian occupation**

After the Ethiopian attack and the subsequent disintegration of the ICU, Eritrea quickly switched its support to the al-Shabaab. The 2007 United Nations Report of the Monitoring Group identified Eritrea as the principal clandestine source and conduit for arms supplies to al-Shabaab [UN 2007b: 9]. A shipment from Eritrea to the Islamists, detailed by the Monitoring Group, included SA-18 MANPADs (Man Portable Air Defence Systems), which were used by the al-Shabaab to shoot down an IL-76 cargo plane of a Belorussian company over Somalia [UN 2007b: 16].



Eritrea continued to support al-Shabaab throughout the years of Ethiopian occupation. The 2008 Monitoring Group Report mentions a shipment hidden in bags of potato and coffee, which included 13 bags of coffee with dismantled RPG-7s; 9 bags of coffee with hand grenades; 4 bags of coffee with anti-tank mines; 12 bags of coffee with three different types of detonators; 2 bags of coffee with pistols; 20 bags of coffee with mortar shells, 27 AK-47 assault rifles, 15 PKM machine guns, 9 RPG-2s, 19 small mortars, 14 FAL assault rifles, 13 rifle-fired grenades for the FAL, 4 M-16s and explosives [UN 2008a: 20].

Just as Ethiopia was supporting both the TFG *and* friendly militias and warlords, Eritrea was supporting the al-Shabaab as well as at least one warlord, whose aims were in line with Eritrea's. The warlord in question - Barre Hiraale - was operating in Gedo and Juba regions, not far from the Ethiopian border. Barre received on at least on occasion a huge arms shipment from the Eritreans, which consisted of a large quantity of a variety of ammunition and about 180 AK-47s, about 45 PKMs, RPG-2/7s, mortars, Zu-23s, DShKs, pistols and B-10s [UN 2008a: 21].

In addition to arming the rebels, Eritrea established a training program for al-Shabaab fighters. Towards the end of 2007, about 120 fighters of the al-Shabaab travelled to Eritrea for the purpose of attending military training at a military base located near the Ethiopian border. The fighters were reportedly of Somali, Oromo, Zanzibari, Comorian, Afghani and Pakistani origin and trained in the use and assembling of weapons and explosives, in making improvised explosive devices, and in assassination techniques, guerrilla warfare tactics, tactical planning, sharpshooting and self-defense. After the initial training, the fighters travelled to different locations, including an island off the coast of Massawa, Eritrea, for practical training in the use of explosives and other weapons [UN 2008a: 21]. The limited number of 120 fighters might point to the financial constraints Eritrea had to face at that time, due to the closeness of its economy and disastrous central-policy planning.

Another measure proved much cheaper, namely the housing and organizing of a good part of the former ICU-leadership, first of all Sheikh Dahir Aweys. After the Ethiopian occupation, Aweys and several other ICU-notables fled to Asmara, where they were

warmly welcomed by President Isaias Afewerki. At one point there reportedly were 42 high-ranking Somali pro-Islamist politicians in Asmara.<sup>172</sup> Under Eritrean pressure, the émigrés formed the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) in October 2007 at a conference in Asmara. The organization brought together representatives of four groups, including the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), former members of parliament, eminent political figures and members of the Somali diaspora [UN 2008b: 17].

Aweys and Eritrea were, of course, not content with founding a political organization in the far away Asmara and sending money to opposition groups. They wanted to establish a military wing of the ARS on the ground, to project their power to Somalia. This military wing, called Hizbul Islam (HI)<sup>173</sup>, was founded in February 2009. Hizbul Islam was in fact a creation of four groups, who were already taking part in the fight against the Ethiopians.<sup>174</sup> Right after its formation, which basically coincided with the establishment of the TFG 2.0, Hizbul Islam declared, that they will fight the new transitional government.<sup>175</sup> To coordinate the movement on the ground, Aweys returned to Somalia in April 2009, with the help of Eritrea, amply documented in the 2010 United Nations Monitoring Group Report [UN 2010a: 19-21].

In the long run, Hizbul Islam, proved to be a disappointment for Eritrea. After lengthy in-fights and a long “civil war” with al-Shabaab, Hizbul Islam officially surrendered to al-Shabaab, and the merge was confirmed by Hizbul Islam chairman Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys in the December 2010.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, as we will promptly see, the collapse of Hizbul Islam did not hurt Eritrea’s interests too much, because, by the time

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<sup>172</sup> American Chronicle: „Eritrea creates a second Somalia government in Eritrea”, 18 March 2007, <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/22321>

<sup>173</sup> The Hizbul Islam was regarded as the rebel group with the closest links to Eritrea. Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>174</sup> These four groups were:

- The Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia — Asmara wing (ARS-A)
- The Somali Islamic Front (SIF, also known as JABISO)
- The Raas Kaambooni Forces
- The Anoolle Forces (also known as Al-Furqaan Forces).

<sup>175</sup> Shabelle: „Islamists Want to Keep Fighting Against the New Government”, 7 February 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200902070006.html>

<sup>176</sup> East African: „Rival Militant Groups Set to Join Forces”, 20 December 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201012201376.html>

of HI's merger with al-Shabaab, it already switched its support to the bigger and more successful al-Shabaab.

Apart from funding al-Shabaab, a warlord, the ARS and various Ethiopian rebel groups, Asmara also established direct links with other Somali opposition groups and individuals. According to sources, payments to each of them were in the order of \$40,000-\$50,000 per month, plus additional funds for large-scale operations. During the course of 2009, the Monitoring Group established Eritrean cash contributions to the following opposition figures:

- Yusuf Mohamed Siyaad "Indha'adde" (ARS-Asmara)
- Issa "Kaambooni" (Raas Kaambooni forces, Lower Juba region)
- Mukhtar Roobow (al-Shabaab, Bay and Bakool regions)
- Mohamed Wali Sheikh Ahmed Nuur (Gedo region) [UN 2010a: 23].

### **2009: opposing the TFG 2.0**

Ever since the inception of the TFG 2.0, Eritrea did not recognize it as a legitimate government, just as it never recognized the first TFG. In May 2009, Eritrean Information Minister Ali Abdow told reporters that, "there is no government we recognize in Somalia and we will not respond to a faction claiming to be a government."<sup>177</sup> Eritrea regarded the provisions of the Djibouti conference as decisions taken by outsiders that did not "reflect the wishes and sovereign political choices of the Somali people" [ARB 2009/05]. Consequently, Eritrea, for a while, continued to support the enemies of the new TFG.

The first - and, apparently, also last - Eritrean weapon shipment to al-Shabaab after the formation of the TFG 2.0 seems to have occurred in May 2009. Colonel Omar Hashi, the Somali security minister said on 4 May that planeloads of weapons from Eritrea landed illegally in the Lower Shabelle region, which was a stronghold of al-Shabaab at that time. "Planeloads of weapons and ammunition landed at Baledogle [airstrip in

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<sup>177</sup> Garowe Online: „Eritrea govt rejects allegations of importing weapons to Somalia, 4 May 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa\\_22/Eritrea\\_govt\\_rejects\\_allegations\\_of\\_importing\\_weapons\\_to\\_Somalia.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa_22/Eritrea_govt_rejects_allegations_of_importing_weapons_to_Somalia.shtml)

Lower Shabelle] and this is intended to destabilize Somalia,' Security Minister Hashi said yesterday, alleging that the planes originated from Eritrea" – Garowe Online reported.<sup>178</sup> Eritrea, of course denied the transfer of weapons, but it is probably no coincidence, that only a couple of days later al-Shabaab started a huge offensive against the TFG, which came close to toppling the government. Speaking about the offensive, Mogadishu residents described the fighting as the "worst" since Ethiopian troops ended their intervention in January.<sup>179</sup> 25 people were killed on a single day, indicating the scale of this particular offensive, which was finally averted by TFG and AMISOM troops. Hizbul Islam and al-Shabaab later confirmed that they have received weapons from Eritrea [Africa Confidential 50/11]. Later, unconfirmed reports also alleged that al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam received foreign fighters from Ethiopia and Eritrea.<sup>180</sup>

Apart from weapons, there were reports in 2009 that Eritrea was acting as a conduit for money transfers to Hizbul Islam and al-Shabaab. According to Africa Confidential, \$200,000-500,000 a month was funneled in for al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam by Eritrea. The funds came reportedly from Libya, Iran and Qatar [Africa Confidential 50/18]. The newspaper, unfortunately, did not mention where these funds were coming from: from the respective governments of these states, from wealthy non-Somali persons sponsoring Islamism, from Islamic "charities" promoting Salafism or from the Somali diaspora, which is very strong in the Gulf states (but not in Iran or Libya). It is worth noting, that all interviewed experts in Kenya and Uganda expressed grave doubts about this story, especially about the supposed "Iranian link."<sup>181</sup>

Be that as it may, it was clear, that Eritrea was providing some degree of support to Somali opposition groups. This was one important factor, why the United Nations

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<sup>178</sup> Garowe Online: „Eritrea govt rejects allegations of importing weapons to Somalia”, 4 May 2009,

[http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa\\_22/Eritrea\\_govt\\_rejects\\_allegations\\_of\\_importing\\_weapons\\_to\\_Somalia.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa_22/Eritrea_govt_rejects_allegations_of_importing_weapons_to_Somalia.shtml)

<sup>179</sup> Garowe Online: „Mogadishu fighting worsens, 25 killed”, 10 May 2009,

[http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Mogadishu\\_fighting\\_worsens\\_25\\_killed\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Mogadishu_fighting_worsens_25_killed_printer.shtml)

<sup>180</sup> Garowe Online: „10 killed in Mogadishu as govt commander ditches to Al-Shabaab”, 9 February 2010,

[http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_10\\_killed\\_in\\_Mogadishu\\_as\\_gov\\_t\\_commander\\_ditches\\_to\\_Al-Shabaab\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_10_killed_in_Mogadishu_as_gov_t_commander_ditches_to_Al-Shabaab_printer.shtml)

<sup>181</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

Security Council adopted Resolution 1907 in December 2009 (see below), which explicitly demanded that Eritrea cease all efforts to destabilize or overthrow, directly or indirectly, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia [UN 2009b].

### **After 2009: weakening support for al-Shabaab**

Since the end of 2009, the constant Eritrean support for anti-Ethiopian groups in Somalia seems to have weakened. Apart from the May 2009 shipment previously mentioned, there are no sources about further Eritrean arms shipment to al-Shabaab, which might lead to the conclusion, that Asmara has at least scaled back its support in the last years.

The reasons for an apparent recalibration of the Eritrean foreign policy are not clear. Overall, there are two theories. The first reasons that Eritrea bowed to the diplomatic pressure the international community put on it in the form of the Security Council resolution 1907. The second traces the change in Eritrean foreign policy back to economic problems, arguing that the extremely isolated tiny country with a run-down economy and virtually no foreign aid had to reach out to the international community in order to survive. We will come back to the reasons of the change in Chapter 5. For the time being, we try to sketch the signs of this apparent foreign policy change.

The first sign of a tentative softening of Eritrean foreign policy came only a couple of weeks after the inauguration of Barack Obama in January 2009. According to US embassy cables later released by Wikileaks, “senior Eritrean officials in recent weeks have signaled their interest in re-engaging with the United States in areas of mutual interest. They have done so by loosening restrictions on Embassy Asmara, by engaging in more diplomatic interaction with embassy personnel, by ending the daily anti-American diatribes in state-owned media, by sending congratulatory letters to President Obama and Secretary Clinton, and by authorizing over \$100,000 to support ongoing U.S. medical volunteer programs such as Physicians for Peace.”<sup>182</sup> The Eritrean Defence Minister even said that he hoped that military relations with the USA could be one day resumed. The ultimate aim of the Eritrean initiative was, according to the

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<sup>182</sup> Guardian: „US embassy cables: Eritrea attempts 'charm offensive' to woo Obama”, 8 December 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/191109>

American Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen, the country's fundamental interest in re-engaging with the United States to "promote a balanced U.S. approach to its border dispute with Ethiopia. Isaias views everything through this lens."<sup>183</sup>

The Eritrean initiative was, however, rebuffed by the American ambassador because of Eritrean support for al-Shabaab. The American ambassador reportedly told key officials that Eritrean support for Somali extremists precludes a more normal bilateral relationship and warned that an al-Shabaab attack against the United States would trigger a strong and swift American reaction.

In March 2010, Africa Confidential reported that Eritrea again put out its feelers to American officials. In a letter seen by the newspaper, Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed regretted that US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson had informed the Eritrean ambassador in Washington that no meeting would be possible between Osman and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The letter said he was still available for a meeting and that this was the fourth time Eritrea had said it was willing to 'engage' with the USA. President Isaias said so twice in letters to President Barack Obama. On 7 December, Carson replied, asking Eritrea to stop supporting al-Shabaab in Somalia. 'A visit to Washington would be inappropriate at this time given the difficulties of our current relationship,' wrote Carson, who also complained that Asmara had taken two years to approve the arrival of US Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen, restricted Embassy activities, intercepted diplomatic pouches and refused a call from Clinton. Two weeks later, the UNSC imposed the arms sanctions [Africa Confidential 51/5].

Although Eritrea was rebuffed both times, there were continued signs of a tentative opening. In April 2010, a couple of months after the adoption of Resolution 1907, Eritrea allowed the Security Council Committee, which was formed under the provisions of Resolution 1907, to travel to the country, where they met with Eritrean officials in Asmara on 24 April. This was a completely new development, as, up to this date, Asmara was allergic to any UN fact-finding mission on its soil. In another sign, in May 2010, in a spirit of reconciliation not always seen from Asmara, Eritrea's

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<sup>183</sup> Guardian: „US embassy cables: Eritrea attempts 'charm offensive' to woo Obama”

Ambassador in London Tesfamicael Gerahtu, told Africa Confidential that the people of his country and Ethiopia were ‘bound to live together’ and that their survival ‘will depend on harmonisation’ In the same interview however, he gave grave remarks about Ethiopia as a threat to regional peace, as well as the usual denial of the border conflict with Djibouti, saying that the whole story was an American fabrication [Africa Confidential 51/11]. The ambassador was obviously keen to display Eritrea in a new, media-friendly light, while at the same time continuing to play for the nationalist gallery: all this time, the official line remained to blame the United Nations, Ethiopia and the United States for the problems Eritrea faces.

In another sign of the changing Eritrean foreign policy, the country participated in the Istanbul Conference on Somalia in May 2010, and subscribed to the Istanbul Declaration, which reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to work closely with the transitional federal institutions of Somalia to break the cycle of conflict in that country – pretty much a reversal of the Eritrean foreign policy in Somalia to this date [UN 2010b: 3].

While these above mentioned Eritrean activities could be dismissed as mere rhetoric figureheads, a significant development happened in June 2010, one, which showed that Eritrea was ready to make tangible concessions. The biggest, sign of Eritrea being earnest in its new-found foreign policy course was its surprising withdrawal from Djibouti in June 2010, in line with the demands of resolution 1907. (In 2008, Eritrea illegally occupied parts of Djibouti near their common border, leading to a major diplomatic row – see below).

On 8 June 2010 the international media reported, that Eritrean and Djiboutian officials have, under the mediation of Qatar, signed a deal to end their border dispute. The agreement entrusted the State of Qatar with undertaking mediation efforts and establishing a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of the border dispute and the eventual normalization of relations between the two countries. On the same day, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, in a statement to the press, confirmed the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Djiboutian territory, as a result of the Qatari mediation effort and the deployment of a Qatari observation force to



monitor the border area between the two countries until a final agreement is reached [UN 2010b: 4]. The African Union welcomed the deal.<sup>184</sup>

Summing up these developments, in its June 2010 report on Eritrea, the UN Secretary General could claim, that “despite the Government of Eritrea’s longstanding positions on Somalia and Djibouti, it has recently taken a number of steps towards constructive engagement with its neighbours and the wider international community. This includes its reception of the Sanctions Committee in Asmara, its participation in the Istanbul Conference on Somalia, and its engagement in regional mediation efforts led by the State of Qatar on its border dispute with Djibouti. These are all encouraging developments {UN 2010b: 4}.”

Moreover, the March 2010 Report of the United Nations Monitoring Group points out, that - as already mentioned - since May 2009 there seems to be a decrease in Eritrean support for al-Shabaab. The Monitoring Group, says, that “it is the opinion of the Monitoring Group that the Government of Eritrea has continued to provide political, diplomatic, financial and - allegedly - military assistance to armed opposition groups in Somalia during the course of the mandate, in violation of resolution 1844 (2008). By late 2009, possibly in response to international pressure, *the scale and nature of Eritrean support had either diminished or become less visible*, but had not altogether ceased” [UN 2010a: 21]. This view was underpinned by the April 2011 Report of the Secretary General on Somalia, which noted that al-Shabaab had transformed itself into an overt and largely self-sustaining entity [UN 2011: 8].

Further confirming this view, International Crisis Group Horn of Africa-analyst E. J. Hogendoorn said in a July 2010 article of Voice of America, that “there is very little evidence to suggest that Eritrea has, or is currently, supporting al-Shabab.”<sup>185</sup> The analyst went on to say that evidence suggests that Eritrea withdrew its support of the al-Shabaab in 2009. Similarly, writing about the support Eritrea has given to al-Shabaab and other Somali opposition forces, the Crisis Group said in a report about Eritrea, that

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<sup>184</sup> Reuters: „African Union welcomes Eritrea, Djibouti mediation deal”, 8 June 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/eritreanews/idAFLDE6572IT20100608>

<sup>185</sup> Voice of America: „Analysts say Eritrea is Not Supporting al-Shabab”, 21 July 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/-Analysts-say-Eritrea-is-Not-Supporting-al-Shabab--98924444.html>



“the extent of that backing has almost certainly been exaggerated.” It goes on to say, that, while Eritrea has undoubtedly supported elements of the Somali insurgency, there is a powerful sense in Asmara that it has been made a scapegoat for others’ failings in that country [International Crisis Group 2010b: 23]. In private conversations, most of the interviewed analysts agreed that Eritrea, at the very least, has greatly reduced its support to al-Shabaab. Some even opined that Eritrea has completely capped the lines to Somali opposition groups.<sup>186</sup>

According to diplomatic sources, moreover, Eritrea signaled to the new UN Special Representative for Somalia, Augustine P. Mahiga, in the summer of 2010, that the country is ready to be more constructive in Somalia.<sup>187</sup> This more constructive attitude was further underlined in January 2011, when Eritrea reopened its mission to the African Union, ending years of self-imposed exile from the continental organization.<sup>188</sup> All this seems to add up to an apparently significant modification of Eritrea’s Somalia policy towards a more constructive role. Nevertheless, it is important to be cautious: the Asmara regime has shown itself in the past to change its foreign policy course extremely quickly.

#### **4.2.2.2. Eritrea’s diplomatic isolation: Resolution 1907**

Apart from supporting competing factions in Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia also fought a proxy war in the diplomatic arena. Throughout our investigated period, Somalia served as a perfect pretext for Eritrea to put diplomatic pressure on the Ethiopian regime and vice versa. The ultimate goal of Asmara and Addis Ababa was to weaken its opponent by any means possible. In the world of international diplomacy, this meant that Ethiopia was constantly working on the adoption of a United Nations Security Council resolution, which would condemn Eritrea and put economic sanctions on the country. In order to achieve this, Addis lobbied other regional and sub regional international organizations, chiefly the African Union and the East African sub regional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In this undertaking, Ethiopia could rely on its international standing as Africa’s second most populous nation, as the

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<sup>186</sup> Personal interviews in Kenya and Uganda, November 2010.

<sup>187</sup> Personal interview with Western diplomat, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>188</sup> Voice of America: „Eritrea Reopens African Union Mission”, 19 January 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Eritrea-Reopens-African-Union-Mission-114212594.html>

host of the AU and as an important ally of the USA. Additionally, the long tradition of skillful diplomacy definitely helped Addis to achieve its goal of pressurizing Eritrea. Eritrea, on its part, tried to muster its extremely modest influence to counter Ethiopia's machinations, mostly in vain.

Needless to say, that Eritrea was constantly attacked by Ethiopia in various international fora well before the formation of the TFG 2.0 in January 2009. As it became clear that Eritrea was financing and arming anti-Ethiopian groups in Somalia in the years around 2003-2006, Ethiopia began its diplomatic offensive against Asmara to halt this support. Ethiopia could claim that Eritrea undermines the internationally accepted TFG, while Eritrea could cast Ethiopia in the light of the self-interested, bullying hegemon. Both countries were, at least partly, right, but, due to its much bigger standing and cleverer diplomacy, Ethiopia was always sure of getting more sympathy than the poor, tiny, sulking and despotic Eritrea.

After the Ethiopian attack and subsequent occupation at the end of 2006, it was Eritrea's turn to launch a diplomatic counterattack, however feeble. After repeatedly denouncing the Ethiopian occupation in Somalia, it suspended its membership in IGAD in April 2007, citing that the organization was being manipulated by external forces – in other words, by Ethiopia.<sup>189</sup> Allegations and denunciations over each others Somalia-policy continued until 2009, when Ethiopia finally withdrew its forces from Somalia and the new TFG was formed.

By that time, however, another major row erupted between them - this time not connected to the situation in Somalia. In April 2008 Djibouti reported that Eritrean armed forces had penetrated into Djiboutian territory and dug trenches on both sides of the border, which was disputed by Eritrea. The crisis deepened when armed clashes broke out between the two armed forces in the border area on June 10, 2008. The fighting between the two forces reportedly continued for several days before Djibouti's military announced on June 13 that fighting had subsided. According to sources, 44 Djiboutian soldiers were killed and 55 wounded during the fighting. Djiboutian

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<sup>189</sup> Sudan Tribune: Eritrea suspends its membership in IGAD over Somalia", 23 April 2007, <http://www.sudantribune.com/Eritrea-suspends-its-membership-in,21508>

estimates said, that 100 Eritrean soldiers were killed, 100 captured, and 21 defected.<sup>190</sup> Although it was clear, that Eritrea was the aggressor, a UN fact-finding commission dispatched in September 2008 only noted, that, while Djibouti has pulled its military out of the border region, Eritrea has not yet redeployed its troops, posing a threat of future violence.<sup>191</sup>

This incident predictably increased the isolation of Eritrea in the region, and added fuel to Ethiopia's quest in sanctioning Eritrea. Ethiopia, of course, was also concerned about its gateway to the world: the port of Djibouti. Since the outbreak of the border war with Eritrea in 1998, Ethiopia had to find a new route for its exports and imports. In 1997, Assab port in Eritrea was handling 80-85 per cent of Ethiopia's international traffic, with only 15-20 per cent passing through the port of Djibouti. However, following the outbreak of the war, traffic from Ethiopia increased markedly: from 1.7 million tones in 1997 to 3.1 million tones in 1998, and 4.2 million tones in 2002 [Love: 2009: 5]. Predictably, Ethiopia condemned the attack and blamed Eritrea for the clashes, with Presidential Adviser Bereket Simon saying that "Ethiopia firmly believes that such unwarranted action should be stopped immediately and peaceful and diplomatic solution must be sought for the problem."<sup>192</sup>

By the time the TFG 2.0 came into life, Eritrea was therefore not also embroiled in a proxy war in Somalia with Ethiopia, but also in a border dispute with Djibouti, a strong Western and Ethiopian ally. Ethiopia's strategy to have a Security Council sanction adopted was greatly eased by this fact. Besides Somalia, it could also point to the border conflict with Djibouti as an Eritrean breach of peace.

What quite possibly initiated the international response leading to the December 2009 Security Council Resolution were three developments: (1) the border conflict with Djibouti, (2) the already mentioned Eritrean weapon shipment of 4 May 2009 to al-

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<sup>190</sup> Reuters: „Djibouti president accuses Eritrea over border fight”, 14 June 2008, [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2008/06/14/idUKL14304427.\\_CH\\_.242020080614](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2008/06/14/idUKL14304427._CH_.242020080614)

<sup>191</sup> United Press International: „Djibouti-Eritrea conflict threatens region”, 19 September 2008, [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2008/09/19/Djibouti-Eritrea-conflict-threatens-region/UPI-86011221861462/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2008/09/19/Djibouti-Eritrea-conflict-threatens-region/UPI-86011221861462/)

<sup>192</sup> Reuters: „Two dead in Djibouti, Eritrea border clash”, 11 June 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/06/12/idUSL11187409>

Shabaab, and (3) the almost successful al-Shabaab offensive, which seemed to render the death blow to the TFG in the days of May 2009. Day after day, reports of huge numbers of deaths and casualties painted a bleak picture of the situation in Somalia. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued, that, in the months of May and June 2009, the TFG came very close to collapse under the pressure of the insurgents. The situation was so dire that on 20 June the Speaker of the Parliament issued an urgent appeal for Yemen, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia to send forces to Somalia within 24 hours to fight off an invasion by al-Qaeda jihadists and save the fledgling government. Without them, he warned, the government might collapse [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/06]. The TFG finally managed to survive, but one has to bear in mind the fact, that in May-June 2009, there was a huge possibility that Islamist insurgents would take over in Somalia. It is under this aspect that the subsequent strong international response has to be analyzed.

On May 16 2009, having been informed of this shipment, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles predictably urged the UNSC to adopt sanctions on Eritrea.<sup>193</sup> So far so familiar. But a couple of days later the remaining IGAD countries joined the Ethiopian position, and put in a formal request for the Security Council to slap sanctions against the Eritrean government and its backers for supporting Somali fighters. “The Council of Ministers condemns in the strongest terms possible, all the individuals, organizations and countries, in particular the government of Eritrea and its financiers, who continued to instigate, recruit, train, fund and supply the criminal elements in and or to Somalia” - a communiqué after their meeting stated [IGAD 2009].

Ethiopia quite probably won the day, when, only three days later, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) supported the IGAD position, and urged the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against Eritrea for supporting Islamist insurgents in Somalia. This was the first time the AU has called for sanctions against a member state. A statement from the 53-member organization said the UN Security Council should “impose sanctions against all those foreign actors, both within and outside the region,

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<sup>193</sup> Ethiopia News Agency: „Meles urges UNSC to salvage TFG from possible collapse”, 16 May 2009, [http://www.kilil5.com/news/21126\\_meles-urges-uns-c-to-salvage-tfg-](http://www.kilil5.com/news/21126_meles-urges-uns-c-to-salvage-tfg-)

especially Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups."<sup>194</sup> The AU also called for the imposition of a no-fly zone and a blockade of sea ports to prevent the entry of foreign elements into Somalia [African Union 2009a: 1]. Eritrea of course, rejected the accusation and suspended its membership of the union. The diplomatic isolation of the state was now perfect.

The African Union formalized its position in a resolution adopted in July 2009, when meeting in the Libyan city of Sirte. The resolution, said the Union, "calls on the United Nations Security Council, in line with the AU PSC and IGAD communiqués, to take immediate measures, including the imposition of a no-fly zone and blockade of sea ports, to prevent the entry of foreign elements into Somalia, as well as flights and shipments carrying weapons and ammunitions to armed groups inside Somalia which are carrying out attacks against the TFG, the civilian population and AMISOM, and also to impose sanctions against all those foreign actors, both within and outside the region, especially Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups engaged in destabilization activities in Somalia, attacks against the TFG, the civilian population and AMISOM, as well as against the Somali individuals and entities working towards undermining the peace and reconciliation efforts and regional stability."<sup>195</sup>

The UN reacted unusually fast, with a statement by the President of the Security Council coming only a week later. It said, that "The Security Council takes note of the decision of the African Union summit in Sirte, calling on the Council to impose sanctions against those, including Eritrea, providing support to the armed groups engaged in undermining peace and reconciliation in Somalia and regional stability. The Security Council is deeply concerned in this regard and will consider expeditiously what action to take against any party undermining the Djibouti Peace Process."<sup>196</sup> By this time, it looked increasingly likely, that a Security Council Resolution was in the offing, especially since the African Union requested it, averting possible accusations that a sanction regime against Eritrea was tantamount to western meddling in African affairs.

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<sup>194</sup> BBC News: „AU calls for sanctions on Eritrea”, 23 May 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8064939.stm>

<sup>195</sup> African Union 2009b: 5.

<sup>196</sup> UN 2009a: 2.

Another factor was undoubtedly the tense relationship Eritrea built up over the years with the USA.<sup>197</sup> It is not the aim of the present paper to give an overview of this relationship. Suffice to say is that the USA has been irritated by the Eritrean foreign policy for a long time. Its war with Ethiopia (a close ally of Washington), the backing of Islamist Somali insurgents who had ties to al-Qaeda, its border conflict with Djibouti, where the U.S. was stationing troops, its dictatorial political regime - all these factors ensured that Washington was highly critical of Eritrea. In addition, Asmara was holding four locally recruited U.S. embassy staff, detained without charge or trial, two of them since 2001. No wonder that the State Department recommended that all US citizens stay away because of travel restrictions outside Asmara, a growing risk of arbitrary arrest and continuing tension along the border with Ethiopia.

The road to the adoption of a Resolution was pretty straightforward from here. In the autumn of 2009, while Uganda was drafting the wording of the Resolution, IGAD - just to be sure - once again expressed its disappointment at the international community's failure to take practical action against Eritrea.<sup>198</sup> A couple of days later, the British government called for international sanctions against Eritrea,<sup>199</sup> while Djibouti's foreign minister accused the country of arming and training militias to carry out sabotage in Djibouti.<sup>200</sup> By the middle of November, Uganda finished the wording of the draft, which called for a ban on all sales to Asmara of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts. It also included a ban on providing Eritrea with "technical assistance, training, financial and other assistance, related to the military activities."<sup>201</sup> The only hindrance before the adoption of a resolution was China and Russia, who traditionally resent the use of sanctions.

By December, however, the two veto states could be persuaded to let the Resolution 1907 through. The Security Council finally voted on 23 December, with 13 states in

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<sup>197</sup> For an analysis of the two states' relationship up to 2009, see: Connell 2007b.

<sup>198</sup> Daily Nation: „Fresh Appeal for Sanctions on Country”, 27 September 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200909280011.html>

<sup>199</sup> Garowe Online: „Foreign Minister Condemns Eritrea”, 18 October 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910191629.html>

<sup>200</sup> Reuters: „Djibouti says Eritrea arming, training militias”, 25 October 2009, [http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/10/25/idUSLP590131.\\_CH\\_.2400](http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/10/25/idUSLP590131._CH_.2400)

<sup>201</sup> Reuters: „Move at UN to sanction Eritrea over Somalia links”, 19 November 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/11/19/idUSN19531413>

favor (Austria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam, plus the permanent states France, Russia, the UK and the USA). China abstained and Libya voted against the resolution. Its most important provisions were:

- demanding that Eritrea ceases arming, training, and equipping armed groups and their members including al-Shabaab
- demanding that Eritrea withdraw its forces and all their equipment to the positions of the status quo ante, and ensure that no military presence or activity is being pursued in the area where the conflict occurred in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island in June 2008
- imposing an embargo on arms and associated materiel to and from Eritrea
- urging member states to conduct inspections on their territory, including seaports and airports, of all cargo to and from Somalia and Eritrea if there is reasonable grounds to believe the shipments contain banned weapons or related material [UN 2009b].

Somalia and Djibouti welcomed the adoption of the resolution. Somalia's representative said Eritrea had been a major negative factor in prolonging the conflict in his country while the government of Djibouti warmly welcomed justice at last against the "unprovoked, naked and blatant aggression" against the country [UN 2009c]. Eritrea's ambassador to the UN, Araya Desta described the resolution as "shameful" and based on "fabricated lies mainly concocted by the Ethiopian regime and the US administration". He flatly denied that his country gave financial and military support to opponents of the Somali government, but to no avail [African Research Bulletin 2009/12].

With Resolution 1907, the diplomatic isolation of Eritrea was perfect and Ethiopia finally succeeded in its goal to have Eritrea singled out as the main culprit in Somalia. It is this isolation from which Eritrea is trying to extricate itself as seen in the previous section.



## 4.3. Ethiopia

### 4.3.1. Inside-out effects

#### 4.3.1.1. Refugees

For Ethiopia, the most visible and obvious inside-out effect of the state failure in Somalia has been the significant number of Somali refugees in Ethiopia. Their number peaked in 1995, at the height of the civil war, when there were 305,000 Somalis living in Ethiopia as refugees.<sup>202</sup> After 2000, their number decreased significantly until 2005, when only 16,000 remained. However, their numbers consequently increased throughout the years of Ethiopian occupation, reaching 59,000 in 2009. As of May 2010, there were 68,000 Somali refugees in Ethiopia, a much smaller number than in Kenya, but still significant.

Caring for this large number of refugees has obviously put a huge strain on Ethiopia, itself one of the poorest countries in the world, all the more so because, in addition to the Somalis, there were 36,000 Eritrean and 23,500 Sudanese refugees residing in the country as well [UNHCR 2010b]. This was acknowledged by Alexander Aleinikoff, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees who warned in May 2010 that the burden for the countries bordering Somalia is “enormous.”<sup>203</sup>

Due to a lack of reports about the way the Somali refugees influence the livelihoods of their Ethiopian host communities, we can only presume that the problems the country faces are the same as in Kenya, albeit on a smaller scale: strain on resources like water and firewood, occasional tensions with Ethiopians living nearby, and the spread of diseases from refugees to inhabitants.<sup>204</sup> Just like Kenya, Ethiopia does not contribute directly to the UNHCR budget, so the financial burden for the country is negligible. There have been no reports that al-Shabaab would recruit among the refugees.

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<sup>202</sup> Data from: UNHCR 2007, UNHCR 2009b, UNHCR 2010b, Reuters: „Ethiopia expects 25,000 more Somali refugees in 2010”, 12 May 2010,

[http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/05/12/idUKLDE64B2E4.\\_CH\\_.2420](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/05/12/idUKLDE64B2E4._CH_.2420)

<sup>203</sup> UN News Service: „Somali refugees strain resources of neighbouring countries, UN official warns”, 3 May 2010,

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34573&Cr=somali&Cr1=>

<sup>204</sup> Nelson 2010.



<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Somali refugees (thousand)</b>
<b>1995</b>	305,4
<b>2000</b>	121,0
<b>2004</b>	16,5
<b>2005</b>	15,9
<b>2008</b>	33,6
<b>2009</b>	59,0
<b>2010 (May)</b>	68,0

**Table 6: Somali refugees in Ethiopia 1995-2010**

(Source: UNHCR 2007, UNHCR 2009b, UNHCR 2010b)

#### **4.3.1.2. Threat of terrorism**

##### **Before 2000**

The most threatening inside-out effect for Ethiopia has been the emergence and activity of anti-Ethiopian factions in Somalia. As we will see, there were several such groups since 1991. In order to quash one of them (ICU) Ethiopia sent in its troops in 2006. Since their withdrawal in 2009, however, the possibility that al-Shabaab or other groups would attack Ethiopia (conventionally or through terror attacks) seems to have diminished. In order to understand the relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia since 1991, we have to take a short look at their common history. This is important, as historical reminiscences and animosity still shape the relationship of the two countries.

The fundamental animosity between Somalia and Ethiopia dates back at least to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the legendary Somali imam Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi came close to extinguishing the ancient realm of Christian Ethiopia and converting all of its subjects to Islam.<sup>205</sup> Occasional clashes between Ethiopia and the precursor sultanates of modern-day Somalia continued throughout the following centuries. During the last quarter of the 19th century, however, the Ogaden region was

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<sup>205</sup> Lewis 2002: 18-40.

conquered by Menelik II of Abyssinia, and Ethiopia solidified its occupation by treaties in 1897, absorbing a large number of Somalis living in the area.<sup>206</sup> The Ethiopians fortified their hold over the territory in 1948, when a commission led by representatives of the victorious allied nations granted the Ogaden to Ethiopia, a decision which was (and still is) hotly contested by Somali nationalists. The fragmentation of the Somali people living under Ethiopian, Djiboutian and Kenyan rule resulted in the ideology of “pan-somalism”, which aims to unify these territories in a single Somali country.

After the independence of Somalia in 1960, the relations with Ethiopia got off to a predictably bad start. With a longstanding history animosity, the problem of the Somali minority in the Ogaden, and a festering border dispute, it was clear that relations between the neighboring states would remain difficult in the extreme [Lewis 2002: 183]. Incidents began to occur in the Ogaden within six months after Somali independence.

“At first the incidents were confined to minor clashes between Ethiopian police and armed parties of Somali nomads, usually resulting from traditional provocations such as smuggling, livestock rustling, and tax collecting, rather than irredentist agitation. Their actual causes aside, these incidents tended to be viewed in Somalia as expressions of Somali nationalism. Hostilities grew steadily, eventually involving small-scale actions between Somali and Ethiopian armed forces along the border. In February 1964, armed conflict erupted along the Somali-Ethiopian frontier, and Ethiopian aircraft raided targets in Somalia. Hostilities ended in April through the mediation of Sudan, acting under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).”<sup>207</sup> Under the terms of the cease-fire, a joint commission was established to examine the causes of frontier incidents, and a demilitarized zone ten to fifteen kilometers wide was established on either side of the border. As a response to the common Somali threat, Ethiopia and Kenya concluded a mutual defense pact in 1964 in response to what both countries perceived as a continuing threat from Somalia.

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<sup>206</sup> Lewis 2002: 40-63.

<sup>207</sup> The Library of Congress: Country Studies - Somalia, Section “Foreign Relations”, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field%28DOCID+so0027%29>

Matters came to head again in 1977, when Siad Barre decided to attack Ethiopia in order to re-conquer the Ogaden. In this undertaking, he was helped by the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), a separatist rebel group consisting mainly of ethnic Somalis, who were fighting a low-level conflict in the Ogaden against the Ethiopians since 1973. The combined forces of the Somali army and the WSLF were initially successful in capturing large parts of the Ogaden, but were finally driven back by the Ethiopian forces, thanks to significant weapon supplies by the Soviet Union and more than 10,000 Cuban troops on the ground. The war ended in 1978, when Somali forces retreated back across the border and a truce was declared.<sup>208</sup>

Moreover, Both Ethiopian and Somali governments intervened in the internal affairs of the other country, and successive governments on both sides supported each others' armed opposition groups. The former president of the TFG 1.0, President Abdullahi Yusuf, was one of the first to receive Ethiopia's assistance after he fled Somalia in the late 1970s. He was one of the first senior officials to challenge the Siad Barre government. Ethiopia was also the principal backer of the Somali National Movement (SNM), the group that liberated the northwest region of Somalia, currently known as Somaliland [Dagne 2009: 18].

The Barre government on its part was a major sponsor of Ethiopian armed rebel groups. The current ruling party of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), received assistance from Somali authorities and a number of the EPRDF leaders reportedly carried Somali-issued passports. Other rebel groups, including the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), also received assistance from Somalia [Dagne 2009: 19].

Even this short recapitulation of events illustrates our point, that ordinary Somalis view Ethiopia with deep suspicion and vice versa. This animosity reaches back centuries, and has a strong religious component ("Christian" Ethiopia versus "Muslim" Somalia) in it. An often heard complaint among Somalis is that Ethiopia deliberately keeps Somalia

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<sup>208</sup> See: Surhone, Lambert M. – Timpledon, Miriam T. – Marseken, Susan F.: Ogaden war, 2010, Betascript Publishing

divided/weak/anarchic, in order to minimize the possible security threats coming from it.

These threats became especially real after 1991, the most important being the already mentioned Islamist group al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI). Around 1991 (or possibly earlier), AIAI began to agitate for liberation of the Ogaden. Like other guerrilla groups in the region, it drew its membership from the eponymous Ogaden sub-clan of the Darood and envisioned the reunification of all Somali territories within a single polity. But – unlike other resistance forces – its objectives included an Islamic political order based on a narrow interpretation of the Koran and the Sunna. The organization cast its struggle in terms of the liberation of Muslims from a Christian, highland oppressor. After 1991, AIAI steadily escalated guerrilla attacks in the Ogaden, prompting a strong response from the Ethiopian army. Weakened, the AIAI entered peace talks with the Ethiopian government, but the negotiations failed in March 1995.

The collapse of the talks heralded a new phase in AIAI's campaign against Ethiopian rule. In May 1995, a grenade attack at a busy outdoor market in Dire Dawa, the country's second largest city, claimed fifteen lives. Eight men, all alleged members of AIAI, were subsequently convicted by an Ethiopian court. Less than a year later, bomb blasts at two hotels in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa left seven dead and 23 injured. In July 1996, Ethiopian Minister for Transport and Communications Abdulmejid Hussein, an ethnic Somali, was shot while arriving at his office, though he survived.

Faced with these terrorist attacks, Addis Ababa resolved to eliminate AIAI, branch and root. On 9 August 1996, Ethiopia launched the first of two raids on AIAI bases across the border in Somalia at Luuq and Buulo Haawa. The strike, which employed artillery, helicopter gunships and infantry, was limited and targeted: according to an independent report, "casualties were relatively few, and the destruction was mainly confined to the police station and administration buildings."<sup>209</sup> In January 1997, Ethiopian forces returned, apparently determined to finish the job. Many of the Islamists – including foreigners – were killed or injured, the training camps were dismantled and AIAI's short-lived terror campaign in Ethiopia came to an end.

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<sup>209</sup> ICG 2005: 8-9.

## 2000-2006

Having eliminated this most imminent threat, Ethiopia set its aims to prevent the emergence of a similar terrorist and Islamist organization. Addis Ababa therefore began to engage itself more strongly in international efforts to create a Somali government. No surprise then, that Ethiopia was one of the chief architects of the talks in Kenya that led to the formation of the Transitional Federal Government in 2004. This, however, did not prevent the emergence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which soon began to present a huge security problem for Ethiopia once again.

The most pressing concern was the pan-Somali irredentism of some ICU leaders. Sheikh Aweys, for example said in an interview: “Really the Ogaden is a Somali region and part of Somalia, and Somali governments have entered two wars with Ethiopia over it, and I hope that one day that region will be a part of Somalia.”<sup>210</sup> Apparently oblivious to the international concerns this raised, Aweys repeated his Greater Somalia vision on 17 November 2006 in an interview with Mogadishu-based Radio Shabelle: “We will leave no stone unturned to integrate our Somali brothers in Kenya and Ethiopia and restore their freedom to live with their ancestors in Somalia.”<sup>211</sup>

A second set of threats for Somalia emerged from the fact that the ICU apparently aided the ONLF (Ogaden National Liberation Front) and the OLF (Oromo Liberation Front), both rebel groups fighting against the Ethiopian government inside Ethiopia. On several occasions, their forces claimed to have acted against Ethiopian troops en route to Somalia in order to demonstrate solidarity with the Courts. Moreover, hundreds of Oromo fighters reportedly arrived in Somalia between June and December 2006 to reinforce the Courts’ forces, and Oromo combatants were killed and captured in the December fighting. The OLF has neither confirmed nor denied the presence of its fighters in Somalia but has denounced the Ethiopian intervention as a recipe for more chaos in the Horn [International Crisis Group 2007: 5-6].

The third problem arising from the situation was the fact that Eritrea was supplying ICU with weapons, ammunition and training [See for example: UN 2006: 11-12]. In fact the

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<sup>210</sup> ICG 2007: 5.

<sup>211</sup> ICG 2007: 5.

whole alliance of ICU with the ONLF and OLF was underpinned by military assistance from Eritrea. Asmara's aim was, as ever, to weaken Ethiopia and to help getting it bogged down in Somalia. It therefore cultivated its links with the ICU, which it saw as a valuable ally in the proxy war against Ethiopia. In several well-documented cases, Asmara sent AK-47s, anti-personnel mines, rocket-propelled grenades and anti-armor weapons to the ICU [UN 2006: 11-12].

These security threats posed a very grave and credible risk for Ethiopia on their own. What finally persuaded Addis Ababa to attack was, however, the imminent danger of an ICU attack on the TFG in Baidoa and the declaration of jihad against Ethiopia by Sheikh Aweys on 20-21 December 2006. ("All Somalis should take part in this struggle against Ethiopia" Aweys reportedly said).<sup>212</sup> Faced with the threat of being attacked by the ICU forces, the Ethiopian army struck first and routed the Islamists in three battles before entering Mogadishu on 28 December 2006, where it was to stay for more than two years.

### **Since 2006**

During the three years of occupation, the Ethiopia army admittedly faced constant and bloody attacks from the al-Shabaab rebels, but Addis at least succeeded on three counts: (1) by counterattacking the advancing ICU forces in December 2006, it nipped in the bud the forming ICU-jihad against Ethiopia, (2) it engaged al-Shabaab on Somali soil, thereby reducing the possibility of al-Shabaab attacks inside Ethiopia, and (3) it apparently severed the link between al-Shabaab and OLF and ONLF: the Monitoring Report of March 2010 makes no mention of links between al-Shabaab and the rebel groups.

Indeed, it is worth pointing out that al-Shabaab has never attacked Ethiopia since Addis withdrew its troops from Somali soil. To be sure, there were several occasions when al-Shabaab issued threats against Ethiopia. In May 2009, for example, Hassan Dahir Aweys said that al-Shabaab wants to take the Ogaden. In February 2010, a statement by al-Shabaab and the smaller Kismayu-based Kamboni force said that they wanted "to

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<sup>212</sup> CNN: „Carnage as Somalia 'in state of war'", 21 December 2006, [http://www.concern-liberians.org/chat\\_room/view\\_topic.php?id=27179&forum\\_id=1](http://www.concern-liberians.org/chat_room/view_topic.php?id=27179&forum_id=1)

liberate the Eastern and Horn of Africa community who are under the feet of minority Christians."<sup>213</sup> However, the majority of these threats were issued because of supposed Ethiopian military assistance to the TFG, and not against Ethiopia itself. A typical example came in June 2009, when an al-Shabaab military spokesman said, that "We are sending our clear warning to the neighboring countries.... Send your troops to our holy soil if you need to take them back inside coffins."<sup>214</sup>

Either way, just as in the case of Kenya, al-Shabaab has never followed up on its threats. The only direct attack Ethiopia had to face in connection with Somalia was an attack by ONLF, apparently with backing of Eritrea, in September 2010, when Somaliland officials claimed that a group of ONLF fighters, who reportedly numbered between 200 and 700 men, landed secretly at Zeila coast, in the Awdal region of Somaliland, in order to advance to Ethiopia. The rebels were apparently routed by the joint forces of Somaliland and Ethiopia.<sup>215</sup> No information emerged, however, that al-Shabaab had links to this attack, or that al-Shabaab forces were involved.

Although Ethiopia itself was, as we have seen, never attacked by al-Shabaab (or other Somalia rebel forces) since their withdrawal, there was one deliberate al-Shabaab attack on Ethiopian citizens. This happened on 11 July 2010, when al-Shabaab carried out two suicide attacks in the Ugandan capital of Kampala. One of the attacks took place at an Ethiopian restaurant called Ethiopian Village, in order to maximize the number of Ethiopian victims. There was, however, only one Ethiopian victim, 32-year-old Getayewakal Tessema. One of the suspected masterminds of the bomb attacks on Uganda's capital later admitted: "that's why I picked on the Ethiopian restaurant because of that mix-up of Ethiopians and westerners, Ethiopians are also a big part of our enemy."<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Reuters: „Somali rebels unite, profess loyalty to al Qaeda”, 1 February 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE6100F920100201>

<sup>214</sup> AFP: „Somalia Islamists warn against foreign intervention”, 21 June, 2009, <http://www.armybase.us/2009/06/somalia-islamists-warn-against-foreign-intervention/>

<sup>215</sup> See: Reuters: „Ethiopia rebels deny standoff with Somaliland forces”, 15 September 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJJOE68E03U20100915>

<sup>216</sup> Reuters: „Suspect says rage at U.S. led him to plot Ugandan bombs”, 12 August 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/08/12/us-uganda-blasts-suspects-idUSTRE67B46L20100812>

### 4.3.2. Outside-in effects

#### 4.3.2.1. Diplomatic support for the TFG

Ever since the TFG 2.0 came into life in Djibouti in January 2009, Ethiopia has been its stead fastest supporter. After his predecessor, Abdullahi Yusuf had to resign under Ethiopian, Kenyan and American pressure due to his unsuccessful tenure, the first trip abroad led new President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed to Addis Abeba, where he spoke to the African Union as well as to Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Their meeting was described as “warm and positive” [Africa Confidential 2009/4]. Somali Prime Minister Sharmarke followed him only a couple of weeks later, in April 2009. Bilateral meetings between Somali and Ethiopian officials continued at a high (ministerial, presidential, prime ministerial) level on a monthly basis.

Apart from bilateral meetings, Ethiopia used its considerable diplomatic weight in the international arena to muster support for the TFG. Addis followed a two-pronged strategy. First, it repeatedly urged the international community to provide support for the TFG. To achieve this, Meles Zenawi reportedly suggested to Sharif Ahmed that the threat of “foreign terrorists” provided an opportunity “to pull the necessary assistance from the international community”, which, according to Ethiopia's foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, was “dragging its feet.”<sup>217</sup> This part of the Ethiopian strategy proved utterly unsuccessful as the international community hesitated - or so Addis opined - to commit enough money and troops to prop up the TFG or AMISOM. Meles harshly criticized its chief ally, the USA, when Washington wasn’t ready to increase its funding for AMISOM. “Somalia needs action, not talk. Uganda and Burundi sent troops to Somalia but they are not getting international support” – he said in August 2010, unusually bluntly.<sup>218</sup>

Secondly, Ethiopia urged the UN Security Council to act upon Eritrea, which Addis (rightly) accused of aiding al-Shabaab. Addis Ababa’s scheming proved successful, as

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<sup>217</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia: Desperate Call and Supporter's Compromised Response”, 17 July 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Desperate\\_Call\\_and\\_Supporter\\_s\\_Compromised\\_Response\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Desperate_Call_and_Supporter_s_Compromised_Response_printer.shtml)

<sup>218</sup> East African: „Leaders blast US for soft stance on Somalia”, 2 August 2010, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/968434/-/pc11pyz/-/index.html>



the UNSC adopted a resolution against Eritrea in December 2009. The Ugandan-drafted Resolution 1907 bans weapons sales to and from Eritrea, while also imposing travel restrictions and asset freezes on the country's political and military leadership. Through the adoption of resolution, Addis hoped, Eritrea would be pressured to cease its support for the TFG – a goal which was quite possibly achieved, as we have seen in the section about Eritrea.

#### **4.3.2.2. The support for Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ)**

Ethiopia, however, didn't solely rely on indirect, diplomatic measures to support the TFG. Using an old and proven technique - war by proxy - Addis began right after the formation of the TFG 2.0 to support a Somali military group called Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ). Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a was established in 1991, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Barre regime, with the support of General Mohamed Farah Aideed, in order to counter the growing influence of militant reformist movements like al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI). Initially, ASWJ was mostly active only in the extreme Northern part of rump-Somalia.

Until mid-2008, ASWJ was of marginal importance, lacking a political profile or military wing. In July 2008, however, clashes broke out between ASWJ and al-Shabaab militias in a number of locations in central and south-western Somalia where al-Shabaab had attempted to ban Sufi religious practices. In December 2008, with the support of the Transitional Federal Government headed by then Prime Minister Nur Adde, ASWJ leaders solicited and obtained military support from Ethiopia [UN 2010a: 12]. As a group opposed to the al-Shabaab it was an ideal partner for Ethiopia to support. First signs of a cooperation in which Ethiopia supplied arms and ammunition to ASWJ emerged in the beginning of 2009, as ASWJ took control of several parts of the north-central Galgadud region.<sup>219</sup> In the following month, ASWJ and Ethiopian troops undertook several joint actions near the Somali-Ethiopia border (but inside Somalia).

The ultimate goal of Addis was, however, to bring the ASWJ in a power-sharing agreement with the TFG. Though it was a natural ally, regional states and other

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<sup>219</sup> Jimma Times: „Ethiopia-armed Somali militias take over central Somalia”, 12 Februar 2009, [http://www.jimmatimes.com/article/Africa\\_News/Africa\\_News/Ethiopiaarmed\\_Somali\\_militias\\_take\\_over\\_central\\_Somalia/31888](http://www.jimmatimes.com/article/Africa_News/Africa_News/Ethiopiaarmed_Somali_militias_take_over_central_Somalia/31888)

international allies had to bring considerable pressure to bear on the TFG before it brought the movement into a formal power-sharing agreement in March 2010. According to the provisions of the agreement, a number of ASWJ politicians were appointed to the cabinet, and the militia commander, Abdikarin Dhego-Badan, became deputy commander of the TFG army.

The cooperation, however, proved ultimately to be fruitless. The TFG was from the beginning suspicious of the goals of ASWJ. It feared that it could emerge as an alternative to its rule. The ASWJ, on the other hand, split over the cooperation with the TFG, with one faction rejecting the deal as an attempt by Ethiopia to control the group and its leaders. Moreover, the share of government power was not commensurate with the military power and territorial control of the ASWJ relative to the embattled TFG, which held only a few districts of Mogadishu. That signaled to other potential allies that the government was not serious about sharing power [ICG 2011: 6].

The deal between the TFG and ASWJ was, as of April 2011, dead. The TFG appears to attach no urgency to rescuing anything from the deal. Indeed, it is an open secret that government hardliners are happy with the deadlock and are pressuring Sharif to scuttle the agreement altogether. A number of ASWJ leaders blame Ethiopia for the movement's growing political and military woes. They say the "overt and uncritical" embrace of that country was naïve, fomented dissension and badly undermined public support and credibility [ICG 2011: 6]. Others blame the divisions in the ASWJ and the ambiguous and obstructive attitude of the TFG towards the deal. What is clear, however, is that the Ethiopian strategy didn't really work out. Although ASWJ still controls parts of Galgadud [see map in ICG 2011: 27], it clearly wasn't the 'game-changer' Addis hoped it would be.

#### **4.3.2.3. Border clashes**

Ever since the Somali state collapsed in 1991, Ethiopia has, on occasions, launched military actions in Somalia and/or stationed its troops there. As already mentioned, Ethiopia launched two raids on AIAI bases across the border in Somalia at Luuq and Buulo Haawa in 1996 and 1997. Two years later, a brigade of Ethiopian troops, supported by tanks and artillery, in conjunction with Somali rebels sympathetic to

Ethiopia, attacked the OLF and a Somali warlord in Baidoa, Somalia. Most of these forces later withdrew to Ethiopia, but some Ethiopian forces remained in Somalia and Ethiopia continued to engage militarily in Somali affairs [UN 2003: 22].

After withdrawing from Somalia in 2009, Ethiopia has kept a watchful eye on military developments on its common border with Somalia. In order to influence the military situation in the borderlands, Addis has sent in its troops on at least 40 separate occasions between February 2009 and August 2010. It is important to emphasize, however, that Ethiopia has almost exclusively deployed only a couple of dozens kilometers inside Somalia. These operations were clearly limited in size and scope, and were not intended to topple al-Shabaab in whole Somalia – as happened in December 2006. The majority of the attacks happened in the borderland regions of Galgadud, Hiran, Bay and Bakol (see map).



**Map 4: The Somali-Ethiopian border**

(Source: maps.nationmaster.com )



A short enumeration of the incursions shows, that the Ethiopians only sought to neutralize al-Shabaab groups near the border or to support ASWJ troops in their fight, not to eliminate al-Shabaab once and for all. Ethiopian troops barely left Somalia when the first incursions were reported (in fact, it is possible that in some areas they have never left at all). In its 20 February 2009 issue, Africa Confidential claimed that Ethiopia launched an incursion into Somalia near Beledweyne [Africa Confidential 50/04]. In March, Shabelle reported that Ethiopian troops met with TFG officials who were chased away from Bay and Bakol areas by al-Shabaab. Locals said that the Ethiopians gave military supply and other equipments to the TFG officials.<sup>220</sup> In April, sources confirmed to Radio Gaalkacyo that hundreds of Ethiopian troops on armored vehicles were at the border area [ARB 2009/04]. On 19 May, Garowe Online reported that Ethiopian troops backed by 18 (!) military trucks entered the central Hiran region, where they set up a base at the strategic Kala-Beyr junction. (Kala-Beyr is a strategic crossroads that connects the southern regions to the northern region of Puntland and the Somali Regional State of eastern Ethiopia).<sup>221</sup>

All this time, Ethiopia firmly denied that it had returned to Somalia. Asked by Reuters about the 19 May incursion, for example, Ethiopian foreign ministry spokesman Wahade Belay denied the reports and said: "This is a totally fabricated story. We have no plans to go into any of Somalia's territory."<sup>222</sup> The pattern of action and denial would repeat itself frequently as Ethiopia was keen to disguise that it was back in Somalia, wary of exposing itself to the wrath of al-Shabaab. Ethiopian officials would only go as far as saying, that they were conducting reconnaissance missions in Somalia: "We haven't entered Somalia. But when there is a threat you can send scouts, and reconnaissance missions. That is normal" - Information Minister Bereket Simon told AFP.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Shabelle: „Ethiopian officers meet with government officials in Eel Barde”, 19 March 2009

<sup>221</sup> Garowe Online: „Ethiopia troops enter central Somalia: Report”, 19 May 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Ethiopia\\_troops\\_enter\\_central\\_Somalia\\_Report.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Ethiopia_troops_enter_central_Somalia_Report.shtml)

<sup>222</sup> BBC News: „Ethiopia troops 'back in Somalia'", 19 May 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8057115.stm>

<sup>223</sup> AFP: Ethiopia admits reconnaissance missions in Somalia”, 4 June 2009, <http://mg.co.za/article/2009-06-04-ethiopia-admits-reconnaissance-missions-in-somalia>

All these denials proved more or less useless, as throughout 2009 Ethiopian troops constantly took position in Somalia. In June, in another well-documented instance, the Ethiopians set up a military camp in Balanbele town in Galgadud. In early May, deadly fighting erupted in several towns in the Galgadud region between pro-government militias and an alliance of al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam militants and Addis clearly wanted to bolster the TFG troops.<sup>224</sup> Similarly, in Hiran region Ethiopia troops redeployed to the Kala-Beyr junction they had previously vacated, after two consecutive days of fighting between al-Shabaab and ASWJ killed at least 31 people, according to local sources.<sup>225</sup> At the end of August a heavily-armed convoy of Ethiopian troops entered the town of Beledweyne, the capital of Hiran region, and reportedly took control of the town without much resistance. Al-Shabaab troops, who controlled the western neighborhoods of the town, reportedly fled further south.<sup>226</sup>

During these incursions, the Ethiopian troops frequently operated with either ASWJ or TFG troops, suggesting common planning and close cooperation between them. On 11 October 2009, for example, Ethiopian troops were accompanied by Somali government forces as they conducted search and seize operations in villages west of Beledweyne, near the Ethiopian border. At least 15 young men were arrested and questioned by the Ethiopian soldiers and it remained unclear whether or not they were later released.<sup>227</sup> Another search and seize operation was conducted in February 2010, when Ethiopian troops entered El Barde village and arrested several people. They were onboard armored vehicles and were obviously searching for a well-known local man who also works with al-Shabaab.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Voice of America: „Official Says Ethiopian Troops Back in Somalia”, 15 June 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-15-voa34-68691027.html>

<sup>225</sup> Garowe Online: „‘Ethiopia troops return’ to key road in central Somalia”, 27 July 2009, <http://abbaymedia.com/News/?p=2731>

<sup>226</sup> Garowe Online: „Somalia-Ethiopia troops jointly chase out Islamist insurgents from town”, 29 August 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia-Ethiopia\\_troops\\_jointly\\_chase\\_out\\_Islamist\\_insurgents\\_from\\_town\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia-Ethiopia_troops_jointly_chase_out_Islamist_insurgents_from_town_printer.shtml)

<sup>227</sup> Garowe Online: „Troops Arrest 15 People Inside Somalia”, 12 October 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910121220.html>

<sup>228</sup> Reuters: „Family of man linked to al-Shabaab seized”, 8 February 2010, <http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smld/414/ArticleID/149353/reftab/69/t/Ethiopian-troops-cross-into-two-Somali-towns-on-border/Default.aspx>

At this point, Ethiopian officials seem to have realized the futility of denying their presence in Somalia. The Ethiopian Defence Ministry finally admitted in October 2009 that its troops re-entered Somalia after it received reports of ONLF and al-Shabaab mobilizing to attack Ethiopia in parts of Hiran region. The Ministry said hundreds of its troops arrived in parts of central regions of Somalia, but left when their mission was over [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/10]. Any denial was anyway rendered useless as the March 2010 United Nations Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia clearly pointed out, that throughout the course of its mandate, the Ethiopian National Defence Force has routinely entered Somali territory, notably in the Hiran and Galgaduud regions, and established temporary bases. Late in August 2009, Ethiopian forces stationed at the border town of Ferfer also engaged in joint operations with ASWJ against al-Shabaab. The Monitoring Group has also learned of Ethiopian force sorties into Gedo region, apparently for reconnaissance purposes. The report went on to say that the incursions and weapon shipments to ASWJ and TFG “constitute a substantive violation of the arms embargo.”<sup>229</sup>

The situation remained the same at the beginning of 2010. Ethiopia concentrated itself on the Kala-Beyr junction and on Beledweyne town. In January and February, Ethiopia was aiding ASWJ in its fight against the al-Shabaab in Galgaduud. There were even reports that low-flying aircraft were spotted over Beledweyne that were probably on Ethiopian reconnaissance missions.<sup>230</sup> In April, heavily-armed Ethiopian troops accompanied by Somali troops reportedly crossed the border into the strategically important town of El Barde in a bid to oust the insurgent al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab had captured the town only a couple of days earlier after bloody confrontation with Somali forces, leading to the death of at least 10 people.<sup>231</sup> Judging from the fact that Ethiopia acted almost immediately after the victory of al-Shabaab, Addis obviously attributed huge importance to the control El Barde, which lays only a couple of kilometers away from the border.

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<sup>229</sup> UN 2010a: 52-53.

<sup>230</sup> Garowe Online: „The Balance of Power in Somalia’s Central Regions [Intelligence Update #3], 3 February 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/The\\_Balance\\_of\\_Power\\_in\\_Somalia's\\_Central\\_Regions\\_Intelligence\\_Update\\_3\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/The_Balance_of_Power_in_Somalia's_Central_Regions_Intelligence_Update_3_printer.shtml)

<sup>231</sup> Garowe Online: „Ethiopia Troops Expel Al Shabaab From Border Town”, 22 April 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004230586.html>

El Barde remained the flashpoint of fights in May. On May 7 2010, al-Shabaab reportedly retook control of the town, which has been used as a base for newly trained government forces from regions in southern Somalia.<sup>232</sup> The Ethiopian counterattack duly followed: on 16 May, according to a local witness, “heavily armed Ethiopian troops with battlewagons arrived in the town early Monday afternoon. There was no confrontation and al Shabaab fled the town before the Ethiopians came.”<sup>233</sup>

After a brief lull in the fights in the summer, Ethiopian troops were back in Beledweyne at the end of August. This time, they were reportedly accompanied by highly trained Somali soldiers that are loyal to the TFG.<sup>234</sup> This incursion, however, seems to mark a tentative end to large-scale Ethiopian actions in Somalia. In the autumn of 2010, no new incursion was reported, and in the first months of 2011, there were only a couple of minor incidents between the Ethiopian troops and al-Shabaab.<sup>235</sup>

(A possible exception to this development came in March, when heavy clashes between ASWJ and al-Shabaab fighters broke out in parts of Galgadud, killing at least 11 people. According to an al-Shabaab spokesman, ASWJ fighters were backed by Ethiopian units, a claim, which is impossible to verify.<sup>236</sup> ASWJ didn't comment on the issue. Still, even allowing for this exception, it is clear that the frequency of Ethiopian attacks in Somalia decreased significantly in the last months of 2010 and the first months of 2011.)

This apparent decline in the number of Ethiopian actions is a new development. As already noted, Addis has sent in its troops on at least 40 separate occasions between February 2009 and August 2010, an average rate of two incursion per month. Even it is hard to quantify, it is clear, that between September 2010 and March 2011 there

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<sup>232</sup> Reuters: „Somali rebels seize town bordering Ethiopia”, 9 May 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE64801F20100509>

<sup>233</sup> Reuters: „Somali president to appoint new PM as Speaker also quits”, 17 May 2010, [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news/international/Somali\\_president\\_will\\_appoint\\_new\\_PM.html?cid=8895312](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/news/international/Somali_president_will_appoint_new_PM.html?cid=8895312)

<sup>234</sup> Daily Nation: „Ethiopia Troops in Country to Battle Radicals”, 29 August 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008300051.html>

<sup>235</sup> See for example: Shabelle „Ethiopian troops form new military bases in central Somalia”, 5 March 2011, <http://ayyaantuu.com/ethiopian-troops-form-new-military-bases-in-central-somalia.html>

<sup>236</sup> AHN: „Moderate Ahlu Sunna, al Shabaab battle rages in central Somalia, 11 March 2011, <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/briefs/articles/90039543?Moderate%20Ahlu%20Sunna%2C%20al%20Shabaab%20battle%20rages%20in%20central%20Somalia>



occurred only a couple of minor Ethiopian actions with a limited number of casualties, signaling a decrease in the size and scope of Ethiopian incursions.

The reason for this development is difficult to point down. It may have to do with the development in Somalia, where the TFG and AMISOM have been slowly taking ground in the last months of 2010. An al-Shabaab offensive in August and September 2010 was aimed at taking control of Mogadishu but failed dismally. Some 700 al-Shabaab fighters were killed and many more wounded. Across most of the city, AU troops pushed back al-Shabaab positions by as much as a kilometer. Thanks to further offensives, AMISOM and TFG troops regained control of seven districts in the capital, leaving six contested and three under rebel control as of December 2010. Moreover, forces loyal to the TFG have made inroads in the countryside as well: for example, in early March 2011 they have captured the strategically important Bulo Hawo town near the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders, which for the past two years has been mainly under the control of al-Shabaab.<sup>237</sup> Additionally, Somali government troops and allied militias have repelled Islamist militants from two towns near the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders (Luuq and El Wak).<sup>238</sup>

These developments might point in the direction that Ethiopia no longer sees it as necessary to send in its troops to Somalia. Increasingly, one might argue, TFG and AMISOM troops, supported by ASWJ and other, friendly militias are able to engage and bog down the capabilities of al-Shabaab, relieving the pressure on Ethiopian troops. As the repeated denials of Addis point out, Ethiopia does not want to be seen as fighting in Somalia. It obviously wants to avoid becoming bogged down again in Somalia after the occupation of 2006-2009. It also knows that making incursions in Somalia increases the possibility of an al-Shabaab terror attack in the country, although this has not happened so far. Its engagement in Somalia, moreover, gives its arch-enemy Eritrea the perfect pretext to support al-Shabaab.

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<sup>237</sup> BBC News: Somalia: Government captures al-Shabab militia bases, 5 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12657466>

<sup>238</sup> New York Times: „Militias Help Somali Force Regain Towns Near Borders”, 7 March 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/world/africa/08somalia.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/world/africa/08somalia.html?_r=1)

Even this short list shows that there are several good reasons for Ethiopia to reduce its presence in Somalia, for the time being. It is therefore possible to speculate that Ethiopia right now thinks that it is not necessary to make incursions into Somalia, a policy, which was anyway dangerous, costly and unpopular in the country. It is important to point out, however, that this stance might change any time, if al-Shabaab gains ground and/or Ethiopia deems it necessary to make more frequent incursions yet again.

#### **4.3.2.4. Training of TFG troops**

Just as in the case Kenya, Ethiopia tried to influence the situation in Somalia with the recruiting and training of TFG army and police forces. This policy predates the formation of the TFG 2.0 and ran in parallel to the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia. As the April 2008 United Nations Report of the Monitoring Group pointed out, Somali National Army troops, mostly from Mogadishu, were taken for training to the Bilate camp at Awasa, Ethiopia. According to Transitional Federal Government security forces, groups of between 300 to 1,000 Transitional Federal Government soldiers received training in Awasa. The Monitoring Group also received information regarding police and anti-terrorism training being carried out in Ethiopia. In January 2008, 1,000 TFG police trainees joined the program in Awasa for graduation in July [UN 2008a: 33-34].

The Ethiopian Government provided all trainees with uniforms and individual weapons in preparation for their deployment to Somalia. The military and police contingents reportedly travelled in joint convoys from the Ethiopian border to Baidoa. The Ethiopian-trained military contingent remained under Ethiopian command. By early August 2008, independent reports indicated that as many as 253 newly trained police officers had already deserted. On 14 August, United Nations and NGO reports concurred that a group of Ethiopian-trained security forces had defected, and attacked the Lower Shabelle security forces in the Ma'alim Osman village. Further desertions were reported on 6 September, indicating the problems of the policy of training [UN 2008b: 37-38].

As we have pointed out in the chapter about Kenya, these ad-hoc and uncoordinated training missions by the neighboring states were beset with several problems (uncontrolled weapon transfer to TFG-troops, no coordination between the different training programs of the different states, no proper notification to the UN Sanctions Committee, desertion etc.). In addition to these problems, Amnesty International pointed out that the Ethiopian security forces, who delivered the training, have themselves been accused of repeated violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Somalia, including extra-judicial executions, unlawful killings, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. In addition to the absence of detailed information about the nature, scope and curricula of the training being provided by Ethiopia to the TFG security forces, Amnesty International was also concerned that such training does not include adequate safeguards to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and best practice standards [Amnesty International 2010b: 15].

Despite these obvious problems and the costs associated with the training in terms of funds, facilities and human resources (e.g. trainers), Ethiopia decided to maintain the training of Somali troops after the formation of the TFG 2.0 in Djibouti. From the beginning of the training program, Addis tried to conceal its activity and gave almost no information about the training, in order to maintain a low-key profile and not to provoke al-Shabaab. Asked by the UN Monitoring Group to provide information about the training program for example, Addis did not reply [UN 2008a: 33]. It is therefore quite difficult to tell the exact number of the trainees, the location of the training and its duration.

Still, from the available information it is possible to sketch the contours of a two-pronged Ethiopian strategy. The first track was the training of TFG army and police units. According to the commander of the Somali military, General Yusuf Husayn Osman (alias Dhumal), one thousand soldiers were being trained in Ethiopia in October 2009 [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/10]. It was not clear, however, how long their training took. It is possible that by March 2010 they were back in Mogadishu.<sup>239</sup> There

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<sup>239</sup> New York Times: „U.S. Aiding Somalia in Its Plan to Retake Its Capital”, 5 March 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/06/world/africa/06somalia.html>

is no further reliable information about whether they have been used to fight al-Shabaab. In addition, there were talks to train up to 1,000 TFG police recruits intended to start in December 2009, with two courses lasting three months each, to be financed by Germany [Amnesty International 2010 b: 25-26]. There are no further reports about this particular program.

The second track seems to be the ad-hoc training of Somali militant groups who happen to fight against al-Shabaab, but are otherwise not associated with the TFG. According to Somali-expert Michael Weinstein, writing for Garowe Online in February 2009, officials of the internationally unrecognized Bay and Bakool governments “traveled to the town of Yeed on the border with Ethiopia and received 200 troops whom Ethiopia had trained.”<sup>240</sup> A similar development seems to have occurred in Hiran region, where Ethiopian-trained groups hailing from the region were said to fight al-Shabaab.<sup>241</sup>

The most obvious example for this second track was, of course, the apparent training of ASWJ forces. In fact, ASWJ has acknowledged that some of its fighters received training in Ethiopia in mid-2009 in preparation for an offensive against al-Shabaab based at Eel Buur [UN 2010a: 55]. Units who have finished this program have apparently reached Galgadud region in March 2011 after they completed a year long training program in Ethiopia. Asked about their role, “ASWJ military officials stated that these troops will be part in the war against al-Shabaab with a mission of capturing the remaining parts of Galgadud region.”<sup>242</sup>

Concerning the legality of the training of ASWJ troops, the United Nations Monitoring Group opined, that because of the signature of a cooperation agreement between ASWJ and the Transitional Federal Government on 21 June 2009 (subsequently reinforced by the agreement of 30 November 2009), the Monitoring Group accepts that the definition

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<sup>240</sup> Garowe Online: Somalia Begins a Cycle of Civil Conflict [analysis]”, 5 March 2009, <http://insidesomalia.org/20090305213/News/Editorial/Somalia-Begins-a-Cycle-of-Civil-Conflict-analysis.html>

<sup>241</sup> Voice of America: „Somali Government Forces say Insurgents Pushed from Strategic City”, 27 July 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-07-27-voa25-68700077.html>

<sup>242</sup> SomaliaReport: „1000 ASWJ Fighters Return From Ethiopia”, 3 March 201., [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/161/Al-Shabaab\\_Desecrates\\_Clerics\\_Graves?PHPSESSID=3c3952e594156bc62e336b99bc696266](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/161/Al-Shabaab_Desecrates_Clerics_Graves?PHPSESSID=3c3952e594156bc62e336b99bc696266)

of a Somali security sector institution could be extended to include ASWJ, and therefore does not constitute a violation of the embargo [UN 2010a: 55].

#### **4.3.2.5. Military assistance**

Ethiopia has a long history of sending arms and ammunition to its allies in Somalia. In the various United Nations Monitoring Group Reports, there is ample evidence of Ethiopian weapon supplies to friendly warlords or the TFG. In the March 2003 report, for example, it is alleged, that Ethiopia sent five tons (!) of weapon and ammunition to a friendly warlord [UN 2003a]. After the constitution of the TFG 1.0, Ethiopia predictably supported it with generous arms shipments. It is worth listing one of the documented arms shipment, to get a sense of the size and range of these transfers:

- Small arms: 2,000 AK-47, 100 PKM, 1,500 G3, 100 RPG launchers, 10 DShK, 10 SKU and landmines;
- Spare parts for ZU-23 (tubes), PKM (tubes) and empty magazines and belts;
- Ammunition for ZU-23, ZP-39, DShK, PKM, RPG-2, RPG-7, B-10, D-30 (artillery), SKU, 120mm mortar, anti-tank mines, AK-47 and G3 rifles [UN 2006: 13].

It is worth mentioning, that, in addition to this shipment, the same report lists another shipment of 10 metric tons of arms including mortars, PKM machine guns, AK-47 assault rifles and RPG, all in violation of the embargo, of course [UN 2006: 13].

Ethiopia continued with this policy throughout the years of the TFG 1.0. Despite the inherent difficulty of finding out and reporting the arms shipments, the Monitoring Group was able to track down several arms shipment in the following years as well. In 2008, the Monitoring Group reported that between 10,000 to 20,000 bullets were handed out from Ethiopian National Defence Force infantry units in Mogadishu to the Somali National Army. Ethiopia also supplied friendly clans, in order to fight against the ONLF and to use them as a buffer between itself and insurgent activity in Somalia. The Monitoring Group reported that ammunition was handed out to members of the Majerteen/Rer Biidyaan clan between Burtinle and Goldogos in the Mudug region, and to members of the then-president Yusuf's Mahamud sub-clan in Galkayo. In the

Galgadud region, members of the Ayr clan near Dhusamareeb were also supplied with ammunition [UN 2008a: 22-23].

The policy of supplying the TFG and friendly groups with arms and ammunition did not change after the formation of the TFG 2.0. The 2010 United Nations Monitoring Report duly pointed out, that Ethiopia remained the primary sources of supply for weapons in Somalia [UN 2010a: 6]. According to Shabelle, ASWJ also received a large amount of weapons from Ethiopia in January 2011.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Shabelle: „Ethiopian Military Officials Hand Over Weapons to Moderate Ahlu Sunna”, 30 January 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201101311015.html>

## **4.4. Uganda**

### **4.4.1. Outside-in effects**

#### **4.4.1.1. Diplomatic support for the TFG and AMISOM**

At first glance, it might seem odd that Uganda is in any way connected to Somalia. The two countries are hundreds of kilometers away and do not share a common border. The Somalia diaspora in Uganda is small, numbering around 20,000 people. Yet because of Kampala's active significant engagement in Somalia, Uganda is affected in several ways by the state failure in Somalia.

The first outside-in effect is diplomacy. From the very beginning, Uganda was one of the strongest backers of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. Abdullahi Yusuf's second trip abroad in November 2004 led him to Kampala, showing the importance of this alliance. At a press conference after the meeting in Kampala, Ugandan president Museveni stated that his country was ready to offer troops to any force the African Union might call for to help Somalia [UN 2005: 3]. In the coming months, especially after the rise of the ICU, Kampala underscored its diplomatic support for the TFG with military hardware: according to the May 2006 Monitoring Group Report, three aircraft transported a contingent of UPDF military personnel and other officials of the Ugandan government to Baidoa. The military personnel were armed and brought with them a variety of military materiel, including a quantity of ammunition, tents, communication equipment, a forklift and fencing material. They also brought with them the barrels of 80 anti-aircraft guns [UN 2006b: 27]. Apart from Ethiopia and Eritrea, Uganda was the only country to station part of its military on Somali soil.

As early as 2006, Uganda was among the IGAD states which wanted to establish a regional peacekeeping mission called IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (or IGASOM). IGASOM was expected to eventually reach 8,000 troops. According to the Security Council Resolution 1725, which endorsed the mission, states bordering Somalia would not be eligible to deploy troops under IGASOM [UN 2006c]. In fact,



Uganda was the only country eager enough to volunteer troops for the mission.<sup>244</sup> Because the ICU, which controlled Mogadishu by then, was unwilling to let peacekeeping troops in, IGASOM never materialized, but the momentum for an African peacekeeping mission in Somalia carried on.

Shortly after the defeat of the ICU by the Ethiopians, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union decided to establish the AMISOM mission. Its mandate was (i) to provide support to the TFG in its efforts towards the stabilization of the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation, (ii) to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and (iii) to create conducive conditions for long-term stabilization, reconstruction and development in Somalia [AU 2007: 2]. AMISOM was to comprise 9 infantry battalions of 850 personnel and was, initially, envisioned for six months. On 21 February 2007 the United Nations Security Council approved the mission's mandate [UN 2007a].

Uganda was among the first countries to signal readiness to contribute troops to the mission. Initially, the country offered 1,500 troops.<sup>245</sup> The first Ugandan troops arrived in Mogadishu in the first days of March 2007.<sup>246</sup> During these months, there was already heavy fighting between the Ethiopian army and the remnants of the ICU and al-Shabaab troops. AMISOM quickly became engaged in the fighting, with the first death casualty coming one month after the deployment.<sup>247</sup> Uganda constantly increased the number of its troops, as other countries, which originally pledged soldiers (Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania), did not fulfill their promise. The only other country, which sent troops, was Burundi, with the first soldiers arriving in December 2007 to join the Ugandans, who, by that time, numbered 1600.<sup>248</sup> In line with the longstanding Ugandan demands for more troops, the Security Council in December 2010 decided to increase

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<sup>244</sup> Shabelle: „Uganda in Quandary of Sending Peacekeepers to Somalia”, 12 December 2006, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200612120179.html>

<sup>245</sup> BBC News: „Burundi joins Somalia peace force”, 1 February 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6319937.stm>

<sup>246</sup> BBC News: „Ugandan troops 'not peacemakers'", 1 March 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6409167.stm>

<sup>247</sup> AlertNet: „Ugandan peacekeeper killed in Somali battles”, 1 April 2007, <http://www.ethiopianreview.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=1907&start=0>

<sup>248</sup> BBC News: „Burundi troops join AU in Somalia”, 23 December 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7158412.stm>

the force strength of AMISOM from the previously mandated strength of 8,000 troops to 12,000 troops, thereby enhancing its ability to carry out its mandate [UN 2010c: 3]. As of early 2011, there were 5200 Ugandan peacekeepers and 3126 from Burundi, with 2000 from each country to be deployed in the course of the year 2011.<sup>249</sup>

After the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops and the formation of the TFG 2.0 in Djibouti, Uganda continued to support the new Transitional Federal Institutions, despite the fact, that the new president, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed used to be the leader of the ICU, against whom Uganda deployed its troops in Somalia back in 2006. In fact, with the country leading the AMISOM mission, Uganda became probably the single most important ally of the TFG 2.0. Underscoring this was the fact, that the first foreign trip of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed led him to Kampala (as well as Kenya and Burundi), where he was asking President Museveni for help in rebuilding government institutions in Somalia. Another visit from the Somali President to Kampala followed only a couple of months later, in July 2009, and then again in October [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/10].<sup>250</sup> Other visits from Sheikh Sharif followed in July and September 2010, while Museveni was the first foreign head of state to visit Mogadishu in a long time.<sup>251</sup>

By this time, Uganda's diplomatic support was not confined to bilateral meetings and the manning of AMISOM. As already noted, the country, which at that time was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, co-led the initiative to adopt a resolution against Eritrea.<sup>252</sup> In fact, Uganda was drafting the resolution which called for an arms embargo against Eritrea and travel bans and asset freezes for members of its government. After the adoption of the resolution on 23 December, with an unsurprising "yes" vote from Uganda, the government in Kampala warmly welcomed the UN sanctions. Minister for Regional Cooperation, Isaac Musumba said, that Eritrea "provided sanctuary to international criminals. It is a rogue state. We petitioned for sanctions on behalf of IGAD and it is gratifying that members of the UN Security

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<sup>249</sup> The Monitor: „Uganda to Send 2,000 More Troops”, 28 March 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201103280023.html>

<sup>250</sup> New Vision: „Museveni hosts Somali president”, 8 July 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/687295>

<sup>251</sup> Daily Nation: „Museveni in Surprise Visit to Mogadishu”, 28 November 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201011290078.html>

<sup>252</sup> Reuters: „Move at UN to sanction Eritrea over Somalia links”,

Council adopted the resolution."<sup>253</sup> He even went on to say that Kampala is going to demand for more stringent sanctions from the international community against Eritrea, because it was a "spoiler" state.<sup>254</sup>

#### **4.4.1.2. Training of Somali security forces**

Exact information about the Ugandan training of Somali security forces is hard to come by. Just as in the case of Kenya and Ethiopia, Uganda is normally rather reluctant to release information about the size, scope and location of its training missions of Somali security forces. Still, from the information available, it is possible to sketch an admittedly vague picture of the Ugandan efforts to train Somali army and police units.

It seems that Uganda began to train Somali police units back in 2005. According to the newspaper New Vision, Uganda trained 67 police officers who were passed out in September 2005. The training was facilitated by the British Department for International Development and the UNDP. Facilitators were drawn from British, Australian, Ugandan and Kenyan police.<sup>255</sup>

Beginning with 2008, Uganda also trained approximately 1300 Somali army troops. According to a source on the ground, the Ugandan army (UPDF) trained two intakes of 650 soldiers, with each intake trained for six months.<sup>256</sup> The passing out of the first intake (575 persons) was in March 2009 at the Bihanga Military Training School. The ceremony was attended by President Museveni and President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, who thanked Uganda for the training. The training was funded by the African Union and the Ugandan government. Separately, Uganda earlier also trained about 100 Somalis for VIP protection.<sup>257</sup>

The training of the second intake seemed to be ongoing in October 2009, when the commander of the Somali military, General Yusuf Husayn Osman alias Dhumal, told a news conference in Mogadishu that neighboring countries, including Uganda, were

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<sup>253</sup> New Vision: „Uganda blasts Eritrea over Somalia militia”, 28 December 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/705451>

<sup>254</sup> New Vision: „Uganda blasts Eritrea over Somalia militia”

<sup>255</sup> New Vision: „Uganda: Training of new Somalia cops”, 12 September 2005, <http://www.afrika.no/Detailed/10420.html>

<sup>256</sup> Personal interview with military analyst, November 2010, Kampala

<sup>257</sup> The Monitor: „UPDF trains 500 Somalis”, 17 March 2009

training several hundreds Somali army troops. The training of the second batch of troops was finished by April 2010, when 627 Somalis were passed out at Bihanga. The Somali forces were trained in basic military skills. Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed presided over the pass out and thanked Uganda once again for its commitment.<sup>258259</sup>

Separately, 124 Uganda police officers were deployed to Mogadishu in February 2010 to train Somali police under AMISOM.<sup>260</sup> In yet another instance, in November/December 2009, intelligence personnel of the TFG received training in Uganda by a Ugandan private security company. The training program was reportedly financed from a United Nations Trust Fund for Somalia administered by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) [UN 2010a: 57].

According to an EU military officer taking part in the EUTM mission (see below), Uganda did not train Somalia troops on a bilateral basis anymore, at least not in the fall of 2010.<sup>261</sup> The existence of a secret training program could not be, of course, ruled out.

#### **4.4.1.3. The hosting of EUTM**

Apart from training Somalia army and police units on a bilateral basis, Uganda also hosted and took part in the EUTM Somalia training mission of the European Union. EUTM was established by the Council of the European Union in February 2010. Based on the Resolution 1872 of the UN Security Council on the situation in Somalia, the Council decided that “The Union shall conduct a military training mission, hereinafter called ‘EUTM Somalia’, in order to contribute to strengthening the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) as a functioning government serving the Somali citizens. In particular, the objective of the EU military mission shall be to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable perspective for the development of the Somali security sector by strengthening the Somali security forces through the provision of specific

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<sup>258</sup> The Monitor: „Uganda to train 2,000 Somali troops”, 4 April 2010, <http://tabiye.com/somalikudhan/detail.asp?nid=2290>

<sup>259</sup> New Vision: „Over 600 Somali soldiers passed out”, 15 April 2010, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/716434>

<sup>260</sup> New Vision: „Over 120 police officers leave for Somalia”, 14 February 2010, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/710121>

<sup>261</sup> Personal interview, EU military officer, November 2010, Kampala.

military training, and support to the training provided by Uganda, of 2 000 Somali recruits up to and including platoon level, including appropriate modular and specialized training for officers and non-commissioned officers” [EU 2010: 2]. The training mission was to be located in Bihanga, Uganda.

The mission started officially on 7 April 2010. There was to be two intakes with 1000 Somalis each, trained for six months. According to an EU official taking part in the mission, the Ugandan and European instructors split the job: basic training for approximately 670 soldiers was provided by the UPDF, while the EU instructors focused on the rest, who have already had some military experience. These 330 would be trained to become leaders and specialists. Their training was to be more specialized, with training in medical skills, communication, IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and the like.<sup>262</sup>

The mission is fully financed by the EU, apart from the transporting of the Somali troops from Mogadishu to Entebbe (the airport of Kampala) and back, which is paid for by the USA. The EU also paid for the extension of the Bihanga military camp, which was originally only able to accommodate 670 persons and which therefore had to be enlarged. According to the EU officer, the cooperation with the UPDF was very good. The UPDF was closely involved in the planning of the EUTM mission, as well as its execution. A EU officer described the UPDF as a “very professional army”, and emphasized the valuable experience it has gained in Somalia. Because of the experiences gained with AMISOM, the Ugandans had a very clear vision as to which skills had to be imparted to the Somali soldiers.

The first intake finished its training in December 2010, but could not be released until February 2011, as the military facilities in Mogadishu built by the USA were not ready. The first batch of 902 trainees, including 276 non-commissioned officers and some twenty young officers, returned to Mogadishu in February 2011, to undergo two to three months of reintegration training by AMISOM, as well as some advanced training [International Crisis Group 2011: 16]. The second intake began its training in Bihanga at about the same time.

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<sup>262</sup> Personal interview, EU military officer, November 2010, Kampala.

#### **4.4.1.4. Military assistance to the TFG**

Apart from training TFG army and police troops, Uganda most probably also supplied them with arms and ammunition. In July 2010 reports emerged, that the USA has given arms and ammunition to the TFG through AMISOM. According to the Daily Monitor, a Ugandan newspaper, Ugandan troops in Mogadishu sold guns and ammunition to the TFG on behalf of the US in an arms-for-cash deal. Authorities in Kampala were quick to denounce the revelations as “a lie”. Lt-Gen Katumba Wamala, the commander of the UPDF Land Forces told the newspaper that “it is Washington that is giving the arms to Somalia. The only thing we have done is to be the link to pass those weapons to TFG because the Americans cannot be on the ground to do this themselves.”

In fact, a US State Department official said as much when he claimed that the UPDF had supplied small arms and limited munitions but “not artillery pieces, armoured vehicles or tanks” to the TFG soldiers. “These are weapons that would be used in an urban environment, fighting a counter guerrilla insurgency,” the official said. “We have provided funds for the purchase of weapons; and have asked the two units that are there [in Mogadishu], particularly the Ugandans, to provide weapons to the TFG, and we have backfilled the Ugandans for what they have provided to the TFG government” [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/07]. This information has later been substantiated by the March 2010 UN Monitoring Group Report, which basically said the same thing [UN 2010: 54]. Although the arms and ammunition given to the TFG was indeed paid for by the Americans, it was AMISOM (ie, Uganda) who physically gave the weapons to them.

No surprise then that the March 2010 UN report claimed that Uganda and the United States provided significant military assistance to the Transitional Federal Government. [UN 2010a: 47]. Apart from the already mentioned July 2009 shipment, Uganda probably also supplied weapons on other occasions as well. In one instance, a shipment of AK-47 type assault rifles, allegedly from Transitional Federal Government weapon stocks, arrived in Puntland. Reliable sources believed that these weapons had been part of a consignment delivered to the TFG by the UPDF, but the Monitoring Group has been unable to obtain specimens and serial numbers to verify this information [UN 2010a: 49].

## 4.4.2 Inside-out effects

### 4.4.2.1. The threat of terrorist attacks

Ever since Uganda deployed its troops to Somalia, it was clear that it might become a target for terrorist attacks. The 2008 State Department Country Reports on Terrorism, for example, warned that extremists moving between the Horn of Africa and North Africa and Europe used Uganda as a transit point [Department of State 2008]. The report went on to say, that, while in transit, the extremists were believed to have illegally purchased government documents and engaged in recruitment activities in Uganda. In response, the government of Uganda continued efforts to track, capture, and hold individuals with suspected links to terrorist organizations. In October 2008, the government put Kampala on high alert and increased security at government installations, popular shopping centers, and other soft targets. Unlike Kenya, Uganda was better prepared for the fight against terrorists, for it had passed a comprehensive Anti-terrorism Act in 2002.

Because of the deployment of AMISOM, al-Shabaab has frequently threatened Uganda with retaliation, just like it has threatened Kenya and Ethiopia. On 21 June 2009, for example, when the TFG was pleading for help, the Islamists sent a clear signal to neighboring countries. "We are sending our clear warning to the neighboring countries.... Send your troops to our holy soil if you need to take them back inside coffins," Shebab spokesman Sheik Ali Mohamed Rage told a press conference in Mogadishu. "We tell you that our dogs and cats will enjoy eating the dead bodies of your boys if you try to respond to the calls of these stooges, because we wish to die in the way of Allah more than you wish to live," he added."<sup>263</sup>

In September 2009, Museveni mooted the idea that AMISOM peacekeepers should deploy to Kismayo and Baidoa as well. In response, Sheikh Mahad Omar, the leader of al-Shabaab in Bay and Bakool regions, told protestors that al-Shabaab will fight AMISOM if they deploy in Kismayo or Baidoa "like we are fighting Ugandan and Burundian soldiers in Mogadishu." Al-Shabaab fighters then made a public display of shooting at large photographs of Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, Ethiopian

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<sup>263</sup> AFP: „Somalia Islamists warn against foreign intervention”



Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Ugandan President Museveni.<sup>264</sup> In response, the Ugandan government raised alert levels and increased security at government installations, popular shopping centers, hotels, and other soft targets in September. This was repeated after similar threats in November and December as well [Department of State 2009].

Further threats were issued in October 2009 in response to a rocket attack by AMISOM in Mogadishu, in which 30 people were killed. Al-Shabaab insurgents said they will strike the capitals of Burundi and Uganda in revenge: "We shall make their people cry," Sheikh Ali Mohamed Hussein, the rebel's self-styled governor of Banadir region, which includes Mogadishu, told reporters. "We shall attack Bujumbura and Kampala...We will move our fighting to those two cities and we shall destroy them!"<sup>265</sup>

These threats clearly rang the alarm bells in Kampala, which hosts a sizeable Somali minority of about 20,000 people. In response to the threats, a joint force from the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), Internal Security Organisation (ISO) and the Joint anti-terrorism squad (JAAT) deployed in Kisenyi, a Kampala suburb with a large Somali minority. "We are not taking these threats lightly, that is why we are beefing up security. We shall, as promised by President Museveni, repulse any attacks by the insurgents", a military spokesperson said, adding, that all mosques in the country were under surveillance [Africa Research Bulletin 2009/10].

The Somalia diaspora in Kampala, mindful of its delicate situation, vowed to identify and hand over to the security authorities any suspicious person. "We ran away from the war and left them there. We are now living in peace. We are ready to die for peace," said Roble Abdulayi, the Somali community deputy chairperson. He urged the security agencies to use the Somalis at the various border and airport entry points to identify the insurgents. "It is us the Somalis who know these people. Most penetrate through the

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<sup>264</sup> Garowe Online: „Baidoa protestors burn Uganda president's picture", 27 September 2009, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Baidoa\\_protestors\\_burn\\_Uganda\\_president\\_s\\_picture\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Baidoa_protestors_burn_Uganda_president_s_picture_printer.shtml)

<sup>265</sup> Reuters: „Somalia's Shabaab rebels threaten Uganda, Burundi", 23 October 2009, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE59M04620091023>

various porous borders at Busia and Malaba. Use us to track them," said Roble."<sup>266</sup> Nevertheless, there was some anxiousness on the part of the Somalis because of the deployment of a large number of antiterrorist units on the streets of their neighborhood, as the Ugandan special forces are notorious for their brutal use of force.<sup>267</sup>

The first concrete information about al-Shabaab activity in Uganda surfaced a couple of days later, on 8 November 2009. Sources within the Joint Anti-Terrorism squad told the New Vision newspaper that three British nationals of Somali descent are suspected to have sneaked into the country in the previous weeks. General David Tinnyefuza, the coordinator of the intelligence agencies said that, in the face of the threats, the agencies were following a three-pronged strategy. They were strengthening the capability of the security systems, intensifying coordination and information exchange with international allies and increasing mobilization. "He noted that the police had been issuing terror alerts to the public, transport organisations as well as hotels."<sup>268</sup> Tinnyefuza should have noted a fourth component: the increased controlling and surveillance of the Somalis in Uganda. In November, Uganda quickly registered all Somalis living in the country, 20,000 in total.<sup>269</sup>

Even more worrying was another piece of information, which surfaced at the beginning of December 2009: apparently, there were Ugandans among the al-Shabaab militants fighting in Somalia. AMISOM spokesperson Major Bahoku Barigye revealed that he talked to three Ugandan al-Shabaab fighters who issued threats against him, claiming that they knew his whereabouts and those of his relatives in Kampala. He said the three spoke Luganda, Kifumbira and Iteso (languages spoken by Ugandan tribes) respectively.<sup>270</sup> He said one of the Ugandans told him he was a member of the Alliance

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<sup>266</sup> New Vision: „Somalis screened over terror threats”, 25 October 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/PA/8/12/699081>

<sup>267</sup> Shabelle: „Somali Refugee - 'We Are Very Worry About Ugandan Troops Deployed to Our Neighborhoods in Kampala'”, 27 October 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200910271112.html>

<sup>268</sup> New Vision: „Security hunts for Somali terrorists”, 8 November 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/700529>

<sup>269</sup> New Vision: „Uganda registers Somali refugees”, 14 November 2009, <http://www.sundayvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=7&newsCategoryId=128&newsId=701170>

<sup>270</sup> New Vision: "Somali militants recruit Ugandans", 2 December 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/PA/8/12/703060>

Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group formed in the 1990s by mainly Muslim Ugandans (about the ADF, see below).

That the Ugandan security forces were up to their task to defend their country from terrorist attacks was being seriously questioned in March 2010, when reports surfaced, that Hashi Hussein Farah, an al-Shabaab terrorist and fundraiser was in the country. (Farah was wanted by the Australian police for planning an attack in Melbourne. He had a KSh7 million bounty on his head at the time of his arrest by the Kenyan police last month). In a slightly confusing story, it seems that in March 2010 Kenyan authorities arrested Farah at the Kenyan-Ugandan border town of Busia. Before that, he reportedly lived in Uganda for a year.<sup>271</sup> Farah, however, managed to escape from his Kenyan detention, and slipped back to Uganda, where he was finally arrested a couple of days later.<sup>272</sup>

This incident raised several questions about the fitness of the Ugandan (and Kenyan) security forces: how was it possible, that Farah crossed to Uganda in the first place? How was it then possible, that he stayed in the country for a year? After arrested, how could he escape from the Kenyan detention? And finally: how could he then slip back to Uganda and on to Kampala without problems? Even more worrying were the circumstances of his arrest in Kampala on 2 April 2010. According to The Independent newspaper, Hashi Hussein Farah was arrested with “a dozen others” by the Joint Anti-terrorism Taskforce (JATT) in Kisenyi slum in Kampala, possibly giving credence to claims that al-Shabaab terrorists have cells in Uganda.<sup>273</sup> Only a couple of months later, these claims turned out to be tragically valid.

#### **4.4.2.2. The 11 July bombing in Kampala**

On July 11 2010, two suicide bombings were carried out against crowds watching a screening of 2010 FIFA World Cup Final match at two separate locations in Kampala. The first bombing was carried out at a restaurant called the Ethiopian Village, situated in the Kabalagala neighborhood, with many of the victims foreigners. Fifteen people

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<sup>271</sup> New Vision: „Al Shabaab terrorist not in Uganda – Army”, 24 March 2010, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/PA/8/12/714038>

<sup>272</sup> The Independent: „Wanted Al Shabaab Terror Suspect Arrested in Uganda”, 2 April 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004020877.html>

<sup>273</sup> The Independent: „Wanted Al Shabaab Terror Suspect Arrested in Uganda”

died in this attack. The second attack, consisting of two explosions in quick succession, occurred at 11:18 pm at Kyadondo Rugby Club in the Nakawa neighborhood. All in all, the attacks left 74 dead and 70 injured.

Al-Shabaab immediately claimed responsibility for the bombings. "Al Shabaab was behind the two bomb blasts in Uganda," spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage told reporters. "We are sending a message to Uganda and Burundi: If they do not take out their AMISOM troops from Somalia, blasts will continue, and it will happen in Bujumbura too."<sup>274</sup> This was al-Shabaab's first attack outside Somalia. The attacks came only six days after Muktar Abu Zubeir, an al-Shabaab rebel commander issued yet another threat against Uganda. In response to IGAD plans to send more troops to Somalia, he said: "Uganda and Burundi, take out your boys before it is too late. You will run away depressed like the U.S. and the Ethiopians who were more powerful than you."<sup>275</sup>

Prior to the bombings, Ugandan security services did receive warnings that an attack might be imminent. According to the East African newspaper, there was information about a possible attack by al-Shabaab as early as June. However, "a focus on the wrong targets combined with friction between private security firms allowed the terrorists to find sitting ducks when they struck", the newspaper said.<sup>276</sup> According to the East African, on June 18, police chief Major General Kale Kayihura issued a circular to Regional and District Police Commanders that warned of possible attacks by al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda and the Uganda-based ADF rebels anywhere between June 19 and October 2010. The intelligence was not specific on the nature of attacks or targets and the police response focused on the usual suspects: prominent buildings, strategic installations and petrol stations and fuel tankers.

Apart from focusing on the wrong targets, the other major problem was the unsatisfactory preparation of the police on the night of the attacks. According to a

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<sup>274</sup> Reuters: „Uganda bombs kill 74, Islamists claim attack”, 12 July 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE66A2ED20100712>

<sup>275</sup> Reuters: „Bloc promises extra 2,000 peacekeepers for Somalia”, 5 July 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE6640IK20100705?sp=true>

<sup>276</sup> East African: „How Police Focused on the Wrong Targets”, 19 July 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007191543.html>

source quoted by the East African, the predominance of young, inexperienced officers proved tragic as attempts to deploy police at the rugby club “were rebuffed by the private security firm that had been hired to provide security by the organizers. At the other bombing site in Kabalagala, Ethiopian Village, the young officers were also denied access. In both instances, police were left to patrol the perimeter of the venues.”<sup>277</sup> At another venue, in the Nakivubo stadium, the police was charged with sniffer dogs and access control equipment that were lacking at the other venues, possibly preventing a deadly attack there.

Interestingly, the investigations quickly bore fruit, maybe because FBI agents were helping the Ugandan authorities, maybe because the attackers made mistakes in disguising their traces.<sup>278</sup> Either way, several suspects were arrested after only a couple of days. All in all, Ugandan authorities charged 32 men with 76 counts of murder and 10 counts of attempted murder and committing acts of terrorism. Among the defendants were 14 Ugandans, 10 Kenyans, six Somalis, one Rwandan and one Pakistani. The presence of Ugandans among the suspects (with the alleged masterminds all being Ugandans), pointed to the fact, that there was indeed homegrown terrorism in the country [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/08]. 18 suspects were later released after investigations had proved they were not involved in the two attacks.<sup>279</sup> Frequently raised allegations, that the Ugandan anti-Museveni rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) cooperated with al-Shabaab in the execution of the attack, could not be verified.<sup>280</sup>

The suspected mastermind of the attacks, Issa Ahmed Luyima, told reporters he was motivated by “rage against Americans”, who he blamed for supporting Somalia’s embattled transitional government. He spoke of how he had joined the Somali terrorist outfit in 2009 and participated in fighting Ugandan-led peacekeepers in Mogadishu. He

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<sup>277</sup> East African: „How Police Focused on the Wrong Targets”

<sup>278</sup> Reuters: „U.S. envoy says Uganda-type attacks hard to prevent”, 14 July 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/07/14/us-uganda-explosions-usa-idUSTRE66C6CN20100714>

<sup>279</sup> RFI: „Eighteen Kampala bomb suspects released, three re-arrested”, 30 November 2010, <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20101130-18-kampala-bomb-suspects-released-three-re-arrested>

<sup>280</sup> See for example: The Independent: „Security Find New Clues on the Terror Attacks” 25 July 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007271123.html>. About the ADF, see: Prunier 2004

explained that he left the fighting in Somalia, crossed to Kenya and was then instructed to head to Kampala to plan for the attacks. The 33-year-old man also said he was responsible for sourcing bomb-making material. Luyima and another suspect confessed to being members of Somalia's al-Shabaab, who said the Kampala blasts were to punish Uganda for deploying troops to the African Union mission in Somalia [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/08].

If the attackers hoped, that the bombing would weaken the resolve of president Museveni to engage the Ugandan troops in the AMISOM mission, they utterly failed. A couple of days after the attacks, Museveni defiantly said, that he will use his position as host of this month's African Union summit to push for upgrading the mission in Somalia from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. Museveni also reiterated his longstanding demand for the establishment of a 20,000-troop international mission for Somalia.<sup>281</sup> While Museveni was unsuccessful in his quest to upgrade the AMISOM mission, he did achieve a new Security Council resolution, which increased its size from 8,000 to 12,000 personnel [UN 2010c]. Uganda promptly increased the number of its troops in Somalia by 2,000, just as Burundi.<sup>282</sup>

Uganda remained threatened by another al-Shabaab attack even after the 11 July bombings. As already mentioned, the bomber who accidentally dropped a grenade in Nairobi in December 2010, killing himself and wounding 40, was originally en route to Kampala, which officials believe was the intended site of the attack.<sup>283</sup> Just at the same time, Uganda said that it had received intelligence reports that al-Shabaab was planning to hit the country during the festive Christmas days. Al-Shabaab promised as much on 23 December, when spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage said, that "we warn Uganda and Burundi forces and their people that we shall redouble our attacks."<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Voice of America: „Ugandan Leader Vows Revenge for Kampala Bombings”, 15 July 2010, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Ugandan-Leader-Vows-Revenge-for-Kampala-Bombings--98517999.html>

<sup>282</sup> The Monitor: „Uganda to Send 2,000 More Troops”

<sup>283</sup> Voice of America: „Police Searching for Answers After Nairobi Explosion”

<sup>284</sup> Reuters: „Somalia's al Shabaab say to attack Uganda, Burundi”, 23 December 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/12/23/us-somalia-conflict-idUSTRE6BM2VF20101223>

#### **4.4.2.3. Ugandan opposition to AMISOM**

One might presume that dangerous military peacekeeping operations in distant countries with little or no imminent political or economical gains for the sending country are not too popular in any given state. (Witness the low support among Germans and Americans for the Afghanistan war.) It is therefore interesting to ask the question: how do the Ugandan voters and the opposition parties regard the Ugandan engagement in Somalia? If it is unpopular, does it present a difficulty for the ruling party and president in maintaining their rule? And: does the public opinion in any way influence the decisions of Museveni and his government?

To answer these questions, it is important to point out, that the opposition parties in Uganda are weak. Multipartyism was only re-introduced in Uganda in 2005, and the first multi-party elections were held in 2006 after a 25-year hiatus.<sup>285</sup> At the 2006 parliamentary elections, the party of president Museveni, the NRM, gained 191 seats of 284. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) won 37 seats, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) won 9, while the Democratic Party (DP) won 8. At the presidential elections held on the same day, Museveni got 59 per cent of the votes, while Kizza Besigye, the candidate of the UPC received 37 per cent. Five years later, at the elections in February 2011, Museveni defeated Besigye by 68-26, and the NRM received 250 of the 350 seats in the parliament. The FDC this time took 34 seats, while the DP got 12 and the UPC 10. Overall, the opposition performed much worse in 2011 than five years earlier.

Knowing the weakness of the opposition parties, it is not surprising to conclude, that their influence and leverage over the decisions of the government and the president is minimal. What is more surprising is the fact, that they only rarely pressure the government over its Somali policy. One would think for example, that the quite huge death toll suffered by the UPDF in the course of the AMISOM mission would provide readily found ammunition for the opposition to attack the government. Although there is no precise data about the number of AMISOM deaths and injuries, from press reports one can estimate that at least 50 Ugandan soldiers died since the beginning of the

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<sup>285</sup> After the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of President Museveni toppled a military junta in 1986, elections were held on a non-party basis. For this period, see: Hofer 2002.



mission, with well over 100 injured. Still, prior to the 11 July bombings, there were few signs that the opposition would disagree with the government's Somali policy. Only the FDC had a clear position on the issue, having long opposed the Somalia deployment and arguing that there is no peace to keep [Africa Confidential 51/15].

After the 11 July attacks, the Somali issue got, for a short period, a much bigger significance for the opposition. An FDC spokesman, for instance, called on Museveni to withdraw the Ugandan troops from Somalia. Boniface Toterebuka said, that "we kindly ask the Government to withdraw our forces because we are not stakeholders in whatever is happening. The people of Somalia can solve their problems through dialogue." DP president Norbert Mao called for a national forum bringing together all political leaders, regardless of their affiliation, to discuss the way forward on this new security threat. Two other, small opposition parties also called for the withdrawal of the Ugandan troops.<sup>286</sup>

As ever, the opposition parties were by no means united in their assessment of the Somali question. The Uganda People's Congress president, Olara Otunnu, defended President Museveni for sending troops to Somalia. "It would be suicidal for anyone to tell the Government to withdraw soldiers from Somalia. We must resist the temptation to pull out of Somalia. If that is done, it will make Somalia less secure. Terrorism does not only affect Somalia, but all of us. All countries have a responsibility to fight terrorism," Otunnu said.<sup>287</sup>

Besigye and others were not only worried about another possible terrorist attack in Kampala. They also presumed, that, in response to the threat, the regime would turn allow even less space for the opposition. "There is going to be increased authoritarianism. We will have an increased security presence and (Ugandan President) Museveni will trample on people's rights in the name of maintaining security", Paul Omach, senior lecturer at the Makerere University told Reuters only a day after the

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<sup>286</sup> New Vision: „Opposition worried by Uganda's involvement in Somalia", 12 July 2010, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/725616>

<sup>287</sup> New Vision: „Otunnu backs Somalia mission", 21 July 2010, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/726543>

bombings.<sup>288</sup> In the same vein, Besigye opined that Museveni “will use this attack to intensify fear among the people” [Africa Confidential 51/15]. According to several analysts in Uganda, this is exactly what happened.<sup>289</sup> The call for stricter controls came in especially handy for Museveni in the run-up to the general election in February 2011, which he again won with a healthy margin.

The campaign in Somalia seems to be unpopular among the Ugandans. A poll commissioned by the Monitor newspaper in February 2011 asked whether Uganda should continue to deploy soldiers to Somalia under the AMISOM mission. Some 64 per cent of the respondents in the survey said Uganda should end its deployment of soldiers to Somalia while only 26 per cent said they support the continued deployment.<sup>290</sup> Nevertheless, the issue is not in itself important enough to dent the popularity of Museveni or to topple his regime.<sup>291</sup> Other issues such as poverty and unemployment are much more significant for the Ugandan voters.

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<sup>288</sup> Reuters: „Analysts' View - Uganda blasts stir regional anxiety”, 12 July 2010, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/07/12/uk-uganda-explosions-analystsview-idUKTRE66B2Q620100712>

<sup>289</sup> Personal interview, Kampala, 2010 November. See also Amnesty International 2011c.

<sup>290</sup> The Monitor: „Museveni leads, Ugandans fear to speak freely – poll”, 13 February 2011, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1107166/-/c55b67z/-/index.html>

<sup>291</sup> Personal interview, Kampala, 2010 November.

# **Chapter 5: Drivers and goals of the selected states' foreign policy towards Somalia**

## **5.1. Kenya's foreign policy towards Somalia**

In his essay on Kenyan foreign policy, Jona Rono summarizes the foreign policy of his country as “pragmatic.”<sup>292</sup> Overall, this approach “has served Kenya well” because “the challenges ahead are many and difficult.”<sup>293</sup> The challenges Kenya faces are both domestic (poverty, unemployment, ethnic tensions) and regional (state failure in Somalia, the fragility of South Sudan). In order to manage all these problems, Kenya, in the past, has always chosen a cautious and pragmatic foreign policy approach, emphasizing good neighborliness in its region and maintaining relations with Communist states while also being an important ally of the USA.<sup>294</sup>

Cautious and pragmatic – this has also characterized Kenya's foreign policy towards Somalia in the years 2009-2011. At the heart of Kenya's relationship with Somalia lies the simple recognition that the two countries are tied together for good or worse. As already mentioned, 2-3 million ethnic Somalis live in Kenya, either as refugees or as longstanding citizens. Any change in Somalia's security situation affects Kenya deeply, as thousands of refugees can flood the country anytime. The countries share a long and porous border. Kenya, being comparably well developed and prosperous, has big allure for the Somalis. Moreover, with 10 percent of its own population being Muslim, Kenya has a large pool of youth who might look to al-Shabaab as a source of inspiration. In short, Kenya is in an extremely precarious position. Overall, the country has to be very careful in its dealings with Somalia, because it is the first to feel the repercussions of a bad decision.

Over the years, Kenya has been affected in four ways by the situation in Somalia. First, there is the issue of refugees, which is largely localized in nature. As we have seen, Kenya does not pay for the caring of the refugees, but the areas surrounding the camps are nevertheless negatively affected by strains on resources like water and firewood.

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<sup>292</sup> Rono 1999: 115.

<sup>293</sup> Rono 1999: 115.

<sup>294</sup> Rono 1999: 110.

Yet, by and large, the “problem” of the refugees affects only the communities and people around the camps.

Similarly, cross-border clashes with al-Shabaab have been largely localized. As already noted, al-Shabaab has no intention (and no capability) to “invade” Northern Kenya. Its attacks are usually limited in time, and directed toward a specific person or goal. The rebels clearly do not want to provoke the Kenyan army to enter Somalia. While requiring attention and resources from the security forces, the border clashes are only a minor occurrence.

The third effect is economical, namely the activity of Somali businessmen in Kenya, who otherwise would have possibly stayed at home. While we have pointed out the economic costs of Somalia’s state failure for Kenya, we also tried to show the benefits for the country. Perhaps most intriguing in this respect was data from the World Bank which showed that Kenya was expanding its exports to a lawless Somalia. Apart from the Somali and Kenyan business community, we pointed out that Kenyan consumers and employees are also benefiting from the Somali investments and activity. While acknowledging that it is difficult to measure the exact costs and benefits for Kenya’s economy, our point here is that it should be realized that there *do are* very substantial benefits for the country.

The fourth effect is the activity of Somali- or Somali-linked radical and terrorist groups inside Kenya. While there is no denying that al-Shabaab is very much active in Kenya (organizing, planning and raising funds for example) the negative consequences of them being in the country have been quite manageable. Most importantly, despite frequent threats, al-Shabaab has not attacked Kenya so far. This is all the more remarkable as they could have easily set off a bomb anywhere in Nairobi, a chaotic city of about 5 million inhabitants with patchy police surveillance, if only they wanted. All asked experts agreed that al-Shabaab has the capacity to bomb Nairobi hands down. So, why did al-Shabaab not attack Kenya so far? This is, after all, a country which strongly supports the TFG and is a close ally of the USA. This question begs an answer.

Several (in fact most) interviewed experts pointed to the same direction. Obviously, al-Shabaab benefits from Kenya. First of all, the country serves as a rear base and conduit

for the leaders of al-Shabaab, where they can raise money, organize and withdraw if need be. The Islamists reportedly have business interests in the city too.<sup>295</sup> Moreover, Nairobi, with its sophisticated banking system, is used for money-laundering by al-Shabaab, various Somali warlords and pirates. As we have seen, it was also possible for well-connected Somalis to acquire Kenyan passports to travel abroad. An al-Shabaab attack in Kenya would mean increased harassment and surveillance from the Kenyan security forces, threatening the interests of al-Shabaab and the Somali community in the country.

The other side of the equation is Kenya, which also benefits from the presence of Somalis. As described in the section on the economic impact of the Somalis in Kenya, Somali money stimulates the Kenyan economy in several sectors. Analysts therefore point to a kind of *silent bargain*, in which Kenya lets al-Shabaab roam more or less freely in the country and the Islamists refrain from attacking Kenya. Some experts described the relationship between Kenya and al-Shabaab as one between “strategic partners.”<sup>296</sup>

This might also explain the paradox we have encountered in the previous chapter. If the Kenyan state is really that much preoccupied with the inflow of illegal money, why did it pass the anti money-laundering bill only in December 2009; and why is the law, as of March 2011, still not operational? Similarly, the lack of an effective Anti-Terrorism Bill is striking in a country which was so often targeted by terrorists. This is all the more remarkable, as the USA is constantly pushing Kenya to adopt just such a counterterrorism bill.

The answer, several analysts suggest, lies in the mentioned silent bargain. An effective money-laundering bill would disrupt the inflow of Somali money, robbing Kenya of valuable investments and damaging Somali business interests. An anti-terrorism bill, on the other hand, would possibly make the impression that Somalis are being singled out by the Kenyan state. After all, against whom would such a bill be directed if not against al-Shabaab, the only terrorist organization immediately threatening Kenya? In short, such a bill would quite possibly complicate and hinder the dealings of al-Shabaab,

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<sup>295</sup> Personal interview, 2010 November, Nairobi.

<sup>296</sup> Personal interview, 2010 October and November, Nairobi.

which in turn might anger them, leading possibly to an attack. This is obviously not in the interest of Kenya.

This all is not to say that Kenya is on the side of al-Shabaab. Far from that. As we have seen, Nairobi is a steadfast supporter of the TFG, hoping that it might one day become effective and pacify the country. To this end, Kenya even volunteered to initiate a military training mission for Somalis ready to join TFG forces. AMISOM is also strongly supported by Nairobi, which sees it as a bulwark against the Islamist al-Shabaab. After all, the last thing Kenya wants to see is the establishment of an Islamic state in its neighborhood, which might serve as inspiration for its own Somalis/Muslims.

Yet overall Kenya treads a careful path. Mindful of its complicated position, it tries not to give al-Shabaab any reason to attack. This is why the often heavy-handed approach of the Kenyan police against Somalis is extremely dangerous, because it risks angering the young Somali population in the country. Apart from these incidents, however, Kenya seems to have found a *modus vivendi* with its dangerous neighbor.

## **5.2. Eritrea's foreign policy towards Somalia**

Eritrea's engagement in Somalia (in fact, its whole foreign policy) can not be understood without its history. In her masterful book about Eritrea, the English journalist Michela Wrong describes a short conversation she had with an Eritrean scholar: "My country has a lot of history," an Eritrean academic once told me. 'In fact,' he added, with lugubrious humour, 'that's all it has.'<sup>297</sup> History shapes and defines the country like few places on earth.

The "official" history of the current Eritrean regime has it, that the country was dominated throughout its history by foreign powers. To take a quick look of the history of the country, it is useful to divide the territory of what is present-day Eritrea. The arid coastal part of the country (the ports Massawa and Assab included) was conquered in 1557 by the Ottoman Empire under Suleiman I (1520-1566). The Ottoman state maintained control over much of the northern coastal areas for nearly three hundred

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<sup>297</sup> Wrong 2005: xii.

years, leaving their possessions to their Egyptian heirs in 1865 before being given to the Italians in 1885.

The highlands of Eritrea, around the capital Asmara, preserved their Orthodox Christian heritage, but were not ruled by Ethiopia. Rather, the area of the highlands was controlled between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries by a vassal of the Ethiopian emperor. The vassal did pay tribute to the Emperor, but “there was no sense of the peoples of Eritrea being a constituent part of a territorial state with clear boundaries.”<sup>298</sup> This tenuous link was anyway destroyed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when infighting robbed the Ethiopian king of much of his power. It would therefore be both wrong to argue, that (1) Eritrea was always an integral part of Ethiopia (as the Ethiopians justified their annexation of and control over Eritrea), and (2) present-day Eritrea was constantly suppressed throughout its history (as the official Eritrean history has it).

Present-day Eritrea was united in a single administrative unit for the first time by the Italians in 1890, when the Italian king Umberto declared the establishment of the colony of Eritrea, with the capital of Massawa. In the Second World War, British forces defeated the Italians, and Eritrea was put under British administration from 1941 until 1952. In the absence of an Allied agreement as to what should happen to the former colony, in February 1950 a United Nations (UN) commission was dispatched to Eritrea to determine the fate of the territory. Under heavy American pressure, the commission proposed the establishment of some form of association with Ethiopia, and the UN General Assembly adopted that proposal along with a provision terminating British administration of Eritrea no later than September 15, 1952. In 1952 the United Nations resolution to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia went into effect.

Although Ethiopia guaranteed the Eritreans democratic rights and a degree of autonomy, these rights quickly began to be abridged or violated. The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie pressured Eritrea’s elected chief executive to resign, made Amharic the official language in place of Arabic and Tigrinya, terminated the use of the Eritrean flag, imposed censorship, and moved many businesses out of Eritrea. Finally, in 1962 Haile Selassie pressured the Eritrean Assembly to abolish the federation and join Ethiopia. Eritrea soon became a part of Ethiopia.

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<sup>298</sup> Wrong 2005: 114.



Shortly before the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia, however, militant opposition to the Ethiopian rule had begun. Fighting a guerilla war for 30 years, first against the Ethiopia of Emperor Haile Selassie, then against the *Derg*-regime led by Haile Mengistu Mariam,<sup>299</sup> the Eritrean guerillas received only limited outside help. The fight was first led by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), and then, from the mid-1970s, by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), under the leadership of Isaias Afewerki, the current president of Eritrea. At the same time, Ethiopian rebels under the name of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) were also fighting against Mengistu. They were led by current Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The EPLF and TPLF cooperated often during the course of the civil war, and, in 1991, finally succeeded to oust President Mengistu. In accordance with Ethiopia, Eritreans voted about their independence between 23 and 25 April 1993 in an UN-monitored referendum. The result of the referendum was 99.83% for Eritrea's independence. After centuries of foreign - Ottoman, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Italian, British - domination and/or control, Eritrea and the Eritreans became finally independent.

Their history left the Eritreans with a deep sense of distrust for foreigners. According to their historiography, Eritrea was constantly controlled, determined and influenced by outsiders, who had little or no interest in the wishes of the Eritrean people. According to the foundation myth of the current PFDJ-regime (the former EPLF), in order to become independent, Eritreans could only rely on themselves. The regime "understood their success in the independence struggle not as a constellation of events or a historical moment and opportunity but as a single-handed military victory achieved 'against all odds'. This allowed it to ignore the host of regional and external enabling factors that had contributed to Eritrea's success."<sup>300</sup> This foundation myth constantly omitted the fact, that external factors (the alliance with the EPRDF, the collapse of Soviet support for Ethiopia, military and diplomatic support from Arab states) were crucial for the success of the EPLF. Instead, the regime credited only its indeed heroical and well-organized fight for toppling Mengistu.

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<sup>299</sup> For a first-hand account of this struggle, see: Connell: 1997.

<sup>300</sup> Healy 2009: 152.

Taken together, this perception led to one of the most important internal driver of Eritrean foreign policy: *enormous confidence and a sense of invincibility*.<sup>301</sup> Needless to say, this greatly distorted the calculations of political risk. This was most evident in 1998, when Eritrea captured the disputed border town of Badme, which led to a two year, devastating war with Ethiopia, a country with incomparably bigger military capabilities. After the defeat, arguably, this sense of invincibility became weaker (although it did not disappear completely), but another, equally important driver of Eritrean foreign policy came to the fore: the *sense of us against the world*, or, in other words, a culture of everybody-hates-us.<sup>302</sup>

This was already evident before the war with Ethiopia. As we have seen, the regime portrayed its struggle for independence as a single-handed affair, in which Eritreans could only rely on themselves. After the independence, President Isaias Afewerki dismissed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as an “utter failure” in his first address to the organization, because the OAU insisted on the principle of territorial integrity, and therefore regarded the Eritrean rebels with suspicion.<sup>303</sup> This prickly speech did not endear Eritrea and set the tone for its relations with other African states, which were, and are, mostly difficult. Although Eritrea initially managed to build good relations with the USA and Israel, this quickly waned after the war with Ethiopia, Washington’s key ally.<sup>304</sup> A short border conflict with Yemen over the Hanish archipelago in the Red Sea in 1995 and its meddling in Somalia and Sudan sealed the isolation of the country. After 2000, the “us-against-the-world” narrative became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Stemming from the aforementioned internal drivers of Eritrean foreign policy is another important factor. If Eritrea could win its liberation solely through its own efforts, and continues to survive without good relations with other countries, why would it need a network of friends?<sup>305</sup> This *who-needs-friends theory* is underlined by the fact, that Eritrea does not really know how to make friends.”...in further marked contrast to

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<sup>301</sup> Healy 2007: 152.

<sup>302</sup> Reid 2007: 22.

<sup>303</sup> Clapham 1999: 94.

<sup>304</sup> About the relations between Eritrea and African states and the West, see: International Crisis Group 2010b: 23-25.

<sup>305</sup> Reid 2007: 18.

others involved in anti-colonial struggles, Eritrea's leaders had little or no exposure to international institutions and no experience of achieving any results through solidarity or diplomacy.”<sup>306</sup> This confidence combined with self-arrogance was well illustrated in Afewerki's lecturing speech to the OAU in 1993. Compared to its neighbor Ethiopia, which always excelled in skillful diplomacy, Eritrea's diplomacy is amateurish. Driven by the obsession of self-reliance and a sense of mission, Eritrea greatly neglected conventional diplomacy. “Contempt for [international] institutions, or for dealing with foreigners in general, has the effect of eroding rather than enhancing Eritrea's statehood.”<sup>307</sup>

Moreover, in the perception of the current regime, the international community has constantly let Eritrea down and preferred its archenemy Ethiopia. This sense of injustice is felt especially strongly in the way the international community deals with the still festering border conflict. After the 1998-2000 war, both governments pledged to accept the findings of the Boundary and Claims Commissions as binding. In the event, only Eritrea did so. When Ethiopia lost Badme in the ruling, it equivocated, and then demanded renegotiation. Asmara refused - and, from a legal standpoint, they were right.<sup>308</sup> Ever since, Eritrea is deeply - and somehow understandably - hurt by the fact, that the international community does not put pressure on Ethiopia to adhere by the ruling. In this sense, the Security Council Resolution 1907 was just yet another unjust ruling singling out Eritrea, writes Nicole Hirt: “Die eritreische Regierung interpretiert die Sanktionen als ein neues Glied in einer Kette historischer Ungerechtigkeiten der internationalen Gemeinschaft zugunsten Äthiopiens und zu lasten Eritreas.”<sup>309</sup> In short, in the view of the current regime, there is an international conspiracy going on to weaken Eritrea. To some extent, this is understandable: Eritrea usually gets all the bad press “in a region where no state's external dealings are beyond reproach.”<sup>310</sup>

Yet another important driver is the fact, that the current PFDJ regime evolved from a military organization, and only knows military solutions. In a region, where the use of

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<sup>306</sup> Healy 2007: 153.

<sup>307</sup> Healy 2007: 154.

<sup>308</sup> Healy-Plaut 2007.

<sup>309</sup> Hirt 2010: 6.

<sup>310</sup> ICG 2010b: 20.

hard power is the norm, Eritrea only seems to know military answers to whatever foreign policy problem. The war with Yemen in 1995, the war with Ethiopia in 1998-2000, the border conflict with Djibouti in 2008-2010, its meddling in Darfur and East Sudan, in Somalia, and even in the Democratic Republic of the Congo all point to one direction: “readiness to respond disproportionately to perceived threats and a willingness to abandon diplomacy for military adventurism.”<sup>311</sup>

It would be, however, wrong to think, that Eritrea’s foreign policy consists of conspiracy theories, aggressive sulkiness and isolation. There is a method in the apparent madness, because, as Dan Connell writes, Eritrea has clear goals and a clear, if questionable strategy to achieve them: “Eritrea’s regional strategy is driven by two overlapping concerns. First, there is the long-range view that as a small, vulnerable state with extremely limited resources but a vision of itself as a major player in the region, Eritrea needs to keep its larger neighbours either in its thrall or internally divided in order to compromise their ability to govern and therefore to project power in the Horn. The most effective vehicle for this is insurgent forces that challenge them from within, support for whom will yield leverage over those regimes and over other powers with interests in the region. Secondly, the short- and medium-term view is that the best defence of Eritrea’s own borders against hostile acts by neighbouring states or by opposition groups based in them is the creation and support of effective insurgent forces that will, as a quid pro quo, assist Eritrea in patrolling its borders as well as levers.”<sup>312</sup>

Eritrea’s behavior is, therefore, absolutely rational. To achieve its goals, the country has to weaken the neighboring countries and support insurgents there. The ultimate goal of Asmara is clear: it wants *to be indispensable in the region*, a country, without which it is impossible to make peace in the Horn. Eritrea’s grand strategy is therefore “to be a player in regional politics that local and global powers ignore at their peril.”<sup>313</sup>

Another important factor is that the regime is obviously interested in keeping the external threat (especially from Ethiopia) alive. As one of the world’s most oppressive state, the ruling regime around President Afewerki instrumentalized the Ethiopian threat

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<sup>311</sup> ICG 2010b: 20.

<sup>312</sup> Connell 2007a: 37.

<sup>313</sup> Connell 2007a: 43.

to its own advantage. The continuing hostilities clearly benefit the regime, as it provides a rationale for indefinitely suspending the move towards democratization. It is also used to justify the silencing of dissenting views.<sup>314</sup> Moreover, the Ethiopian threat also makes it necessary to maintain a huge army<sup>315</sup>, and it might be argued that the conscription and subsequent training of young males keeps the youth busy and prevents them from challenging the regime.

Let us now turn to Eritrea's foreign policy towards Somalia. The most important goal of the Eritrean engagement in Somalia is to weaken Ethiopia. As long as the country had peaceful relations with Ethiopia, i.e. up until 1998, it did not support any faction in Somalia (more precisely, there is no information suggesting otherwise), although the civil war there was already going on for years. First information about Eritrean arms shipment coincides almost precisely with the outbreak of the war against Ethiopia [UN 2002: 20-21].

This suggests that Somalia became interesting for Eritrea only after the breaking down of its relations with Ethiopia. From 1999 to 2009, we see a steady pattern of Eritrean arms shipments to Somali factions opposed to Ethiopia. According to Kidane Mengisteab, the long-term interest of Eritrea is similar to Somalia's: "to hinder Ethiopia's hegemonic aspirations in the region. Eritrea's support of the UIC [the Islamic Courts Union], is often viewed as a proxy war intended to bleed Ethiopia. But it is not merely a proxy war. It can be viewed as strategic cooperation with Somali opponents of Ethiopian hegemony in that both countries are seeking to check Ethiopia's apparently expansionist tendencies."<sup>316</sup> To this end, the regime in Asmara has provided weapons and ammunition to anti-Ethiopian groups (be they the ICI, al-Shabaab, Hizbul Islam or other groups). Moreover, as we have seen, Eritrea organized a training camp for the rebels, and hosted and helped to organize the anti-Ethiopian Alliance for the Liberation of Somalia (ARS). On the diplomatic front, it never recognized the TFG 1,0 and 2.0, and regarded Somalia as a state being without government.

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<sup>314</sup> Connell 2007a: 35.

<sup>315</sup> People under military service are estimated to be 350,000 to 420,000, see: Chatham House 2007: 8.

<sup>316</sup> Mengisteab 2007: 65.

Apart from its goal to weaken Ethiopia, Eritrea has another goal in Somalia: to make itself indispensable for any future, possible “solution” of the Somali conflict. Without Eritrea on board, the regime hopes, it should be impossible to negotiate effectively about Somalia. The support for al-Shabaab is, in this sense, a bargaining chip, and presumably, Eritrea would only cease its support for al-Shabaab if it gets something else in return. As we have already mentioned, Eritrea wants to be a player in regional politics which can not be ignored. With the support for the Islamists, this goal is clearly achieved.

Yet another important factor in the Eritrean engagement in Somalia is the fact, that Eritrea is basically unaffected by the negative effects of the conflict. It has no border with Somalia, therefore, it has no Somali refugees to host and support. Its rudimentary economy is mostly unaffected by the conflict in Somalia, as it had no significant economic relations with, or interests in, Somalia. Although it primarily supported its rival, Hizbul Islam, it is highly unlikely, that al-Shabaab would stage a terrorist attack in Eritrea, especially since Eritrea supplied arms and ammunition to al-Shabaab as well. There is, as of yet, no sign, that Somali Islamist movements would inspire similar movements in Eritrea. This is, of course, not to say, that this can be ruled out. About half of Eritrea’s population is Sunni Muslim, and in the past, there has been radical Islamist groups trying to topple the regime.<sup>317</sup>

More recently, the RSADO (Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization) rebels have shown activity. In late 2009 and early 2010 the group has carried out several attacks against Eritrean government soldiers and installations,<sup>318</sup> but there is no sign that the group would fight for Islamist reasons. In fact, it seems that the reason for their activity is the government's 'suppression' of the Afar minority.<sup>319</sup> In short, it is unlikely that Eritrea, as a sponsor of Islamist, would be engulfed by terrorist/Islamist activity emanating from Somalia.

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<sup>317</sup> For example, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ), see: Kibreab 2007: 84.

<sup>318</sup> See for example: AFP: „Eritrea rebels say killed 17 government troops”, 16 February 2010, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hh-RRFgwRY5cHdixLrhYqKegeneA>

<sup>319</sup> Press TV: „‘Rebels kill ‘25 Eritrean soldiers’”, 3 January 2010

All this points to the fact that Eritrea is, for one reason or another, mostly sheltered by negative effects emanating from Somalia: no refugees, negligible economic costs and a low probability of terrorism spilling over. The costs for supporting al-Shabaab are, therefore, not too big: the money needed to finance the weapons, ammunition and their transport to Somalia is the only immediate tangible cost. Eritrea is, therefore in a very advantageous position: it can support any Somali faction with relatively few costs and huge benefits.

This is, however, not to say, that there no costs for Eritrea whatsoever. For supporting al-Shabaab, Asmara had to pay with growing isolation. By 2009, the country was an international *pariah* state, having bad relations with basically all its neighbors, the USA and the EU and withdrawing from the AU as well as the IGAD. Its isolation was underlined by the Security Council Resolution 1907 in December 2009, which punished the country for supporting al-Shabaab and its border conflict with Djibouti.

Lately, however, there seems to be a slight recalibration of Eritrean foreign policy going on. As we have described in Chapter 4, Eritrea has taken a slightly more constructive approach since 2009. The reasons for this are not clear. One reason, according to several interviewed diplomats and analysts, might be that the isolation is apparently taking a toll on the country.<sup>320</sup> With almost no friends left and increasingly pressurized by the international community (exemplified by the Resolution 1907), the Afewerki regime might have concluded, that it is no longer beneficial to be isolated in such a way, and that it might gain more if it behaved more positive.

Another school of thought, also heard often in interviews, traces the apparent opening to the situation of the Eritrean economy, which is, in short, catastrophic. Precise data is hard to come by, but available information paints a very bleak picture. Between 1998-2008 GDP grew on an annual average by 0.4 per cent from 1998-2008, and per capita GDP declined by 3.3 per cent during the same period [International Crisis Group 2010b: 14]. According to more recent data from the Germany Trade and Investment, the Eritrean economy is currently still in a very difficult situation:

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<sup>320</sup> Personal interviews and email communications, Nairobi, Kampala and London November-December 2010.



Indikatoren	2008	2009	2010
BIP-Wachstum (%)	2,0	3,5	6,0
Budgetsaldo (% von BIP)	-25,0	-14,5	-13,7
Leistungsbilanz ((% von BIP)	-10,9	-10,3	-9,8
Inflationsrate	19,9	20,0	18,0 <sup>321</sup>

**Table 5: Selected indicators of the Eritrean economy 2008-2010**

(Source: GTAI 2010b: 2)

Bad relations with neighboring states, almost no foreign investments, red tape, massive militarization, weak infrastructure, low levels of industrialization, recurring droughts and few natural resources (apart from gold) all contribute to this situation. Some analysts went so far as to say, that the private sector has collapsed and that there are no jobs and no spare land at all.<sup>322</sup> Homegrown industry is unable to produce even basic products like Coca-Cola or tomato puree.<sup>323</sup> Black market rates seem to be about 50%.<sup>324</sup> Large parts of the population live, by all accounts, in dire poverty: “Nach UN-Schätzung lebt etwa 1 Mio. Menschen und damit ein Fünftel der Einwohner unterhalb der Armutsgrenze.”<sup>325</sup>

It might be argued, that, for the Eritrean economy to recover fully, it would be of paramount importance to reestablish good relations with Ethiopia. It is hard to overstate the importance of Ethiopia for the Eritrean economy: before the war, “Ethiopia constituted about two thirds of Eritrea’s export market; the closure of that market has been devastating, and factories and labour have been idle as a result.”<sup>326</sup>

Yet another theory holds that Eritrea ceased to support al-Shabaab and opened up because Ethiopia was no longer in Somalia, and that therefore the importance and usefulness of al-Shabaab diminished in the eyes of Asmara.<sup>327</sup> As Ethiopia was officially not in Somalia anymore, it could not be harmed by supporting al-Shabaab.

<sup>321</sup> Data from: GTAI 2010b: 2.

<sup>322</sup> Chatham House 2007: 8.

<sup>323</sup> Hirt 2010: 4.

<sup>324</sup> Chatham House 2007: 10.

<sup>325</sup> GTAI 2010b: 4.

<sup>326</sup> International Crisis Group 2010b: 14.

<sup>327</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, October 2010

This theory is supported by the fact, that we have no information about Eritrean arms shipment at all since May 2009. Since Ethiopian troops left Somalia in January 2009, there was apparently only one arms shipment from Eritrea, in May 2009.<sup>328</sup>

Linked to this theory is another opinion voiced by analysts: that Eritrea also ceased to support al-Shabaab, because the OLF and ONLF rebels, which used to cooperate with the Islamists<sup>329</sup>, greatly reduced their activity in Somalia. (There is currently no sign of cooperation between Eritrea and either OLF or ONLF). Consequently, the usefulness of al-Shabaab as a *liaison* to them diminished. Yet another experts say that with the demise of Hizbul Islam, Asmara's closest ally in Somalia, there was nobody left to support, because Eritrea never really trusted al-Shabaab.<sup>330</sup>

As all these competing theories show us, it is extremely hard to fathom the foreign policy of the Afewerki regime. With a highly regulated press and strict limitations on travelling, it is extremely hard to gather information about the country. It is perhaps Eritrea which is the most opaque country in the region, so this section trying to explain its foreign policy vis-à-vis Somalia is inherently prone to errors and misinterpretations. Still, we believe that the basic assumptions underlying our analysis are, by and large, correct. Only the future knows which direction the Eritrean foreign policy takes from here.

### **5.3. Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Somalia**

It is fair to argue, that Ethiopia is dominant state (or has the regional hegemony) in the Horn of Africa. With 88 million people, it has by far the biggest population in the region (and the second biggest in Africa). With more than 1 million square kilometers, it is the biggest country in the region. Although poorer than its neighbors, Ethiopia has a huge and experienced army, which reportedly numbers 160,000 soldiers.<sup>331</sup> According to the analysis of Arno Meinken, the Ethiopian military is an army with middle-sized capacity, worse than Angola's or South Africa's, but far better than the capabilities of

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<sup>328</sup> Garowe Online: „Eritrea govt rejects allegations of importing weapons to Somalia”

<sup>329</sup> For their cooperation, see for example: UN 2002: 20-21 or International Crisis Group 2007: 5.

<sup>330</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, October 2010.

<sup>331</sup> Meinken 2005: 30.

the surrounding states.<sup>332</sup> It is also important to point out, that the Ethiopian military is probably the most experienced army in Africa: their soldiers have fought against Somalia in the Ogaden War 1977-78, against the Eritrean EPLF- and the Ethiopian TPLF-rebels (or, rather, on their side) in the 70s and 80s, against Eritrea in the 1998-2000 war and against the Somali rebels in 2006-09. Ethiopia is obviously not shy to use its army.

With a long and glorious history as Africa's only country (apart from Liberia), which has never been colonized, Ethiopia has an exceptional and elevated position in African history. The Orthodox Christian Ethiopian Emperors in the Middle Ages presided over a huge empire, conducted commerce over vast distances and had contacts with the leading European states of the time. "In the process, the representatives of the central Ethiopian state developed an ideology or manifest destiny that legitimated their right to govern the periphery in terms of empire and Christianity; in time, they associated this with a sense of Ethiopian nationalism"<sup>333</sup> – writes Christopher Clapham. This sense of exceptionalism and manifest destiny continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie was crucial in founding the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was hosted in Addis Abeba. Its successor, the African Union also has its headquarters in the Ethiopian capital. With an excellent diplomatic service, a huge diaspora and centuries-old relations with Western states, Ethiopia sees itself as the leading light of the region, if not the continent. This confidence and manifest destiny also drives the foreign policy of the country.

Throughout its history, Ethiopia, surrounded by Muslim states, has often been in a precarious security environment. This is also true for the years after the 1991 toppling of Mengistu's regime. Currently, Ethiopia has a tense relationship with Eritrea, with the two countries sponsoring each other's opposition groups and supporting each other's rebels. On its western frontier, Ethiopia faces the risks of an independent but fragile South Sudan and the possibility of a war between the North and the South. And there is Somalia, from which emanated the AIAI, the ICU, and, currently, the al-Shabaab, all deeply hostile to Ethiopia. Moreover, the country has to deal with home-grown rebel

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<sup>332</sup> Meinken 2005: 33.

<sup>333</sup> Clapham 1999: 85.

insurgencies like the OLF and ONLF and skirmishes between tribes and bandit activity on its frontier to Kenya. In short, Ethiopia has several security challenges to answer.

In its government White Paper of 2002, Ethiopia analyzes the challenges it faces in the following way: one can identify “three concentric rings of Ethiopian national security concern. The outermost ring is the strategic challenge, posed by Egypt and a possible future militant Islamist state in the Arabian peninsular. In the middle ring are the neighboring countries that can pose an immediate security threat through invasion or destabilization, the latter through sponsoring rural guerrillas or urban terrorists. In the innermost ring are those local issues in sensitive border areas that can provide a spark for conflict, which may then escalate out of control. One may agree or disagree with the analysis and the conclusions of this White Paper. But it is notable that the Ethiopian state is capable of articulating and pursuing a coherent security strategy and foreign policy.”<sup>334</sup> Somalia is obviously in the second ring, but it is important to point out, that it is only one of several challenges which Ethiopia has to face.

As we have seen, there are (and were) several negative effects emanating from Somalia into Ethiopia. The first such effect is the refugees, although their number has vastly decreased over the years: in 1995, there were more than 300,000, while in 2010 there were “only” 68,000.

It is on the national security front, that the situation in Somalia is the most threatening for Ethiopia. The biggest problem for Ethiopia was, arguably, the ICU, which declared jihad against Ethiopia in 2006, and was trying to attack Baidoa, the seat of the TFG 1.0 near the Ethiopian border, when the Ethiopian army counterattacked. In the event, the ICU was quickly defeated, but Ethiopia became bogged down in Somalia on an unsuccessful occupying mission, which cost the lives of 800 Ethiopian soldiers [Africa Confidential 50/3].

After withdrawing from Mogadishu and central Somalia in early 2009, Ethiopia is still very much active in the border region, with frequent incursions and occasional attacks on al-Shabaab. It seems that Ethiopia has no appetite to go back to Somalia once again, but its current position still allows it to influence the situation in the country, with arms

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<sup>334</sup> Mohammed 2007: 1.

shipments to friendly groups and the sponsoring of anti-al-Shabaab outfits like ASWJ. The current disposition is perhaps the one that is the most convenient for Addis. It is not in Somalia as occupier anymore, therefore it is not constantly attacked. But it is close enough to the fire to have considerable leverage over the development of the security situation in Somalia. And, ultimately, Ethiopia still leaves itself the possibility to return to Somalia if the TFG 2.0 gets in serious trouble. Ethiopia is, more than ever, still the ultimate life-insurance for the TFG.

Moreover, the threat from al-Shabaab is manageable: the Islamists are obviously not keen to engage Ethiopia on its own soil: there has not been any al-Shabaab attack on Ethiopian troops *inside Ethiopia* (though there were plenty of skirmishes on Somali soil.) And, equally important, al-Shabaab has not conducted any terrorist attack in Ethiopia whatsoever. (Although its attack on Kampala was staged in a location which ensured that there were Ethiopian victims as well.)

Equally important for Ethiopia under national security aspects is its diplomatic war with Eritrea fought on the back of the Somali issue. Here, the dominance and advantage of Ethiopia is clear. Using the Eritrean support for al-Shabaab as a pretext, Ethiopia helped to put considerable international pressure on Eritrea. The Ethiopian diplomatic machine worked, once again, brilliantly. First, it convinced IGAD and AU to condemn Eritrea, and then, in turn, the AU to push for a Security Council Resolution, which it duly secured in December 2009. Having achieved that was obviously the ultimate prize for Ethiopia, and further deflected attention from its illegal arms shipments to the TFG 2.0, and from the fact that it is itself constantly violating the Algiers Agreement with disregarding the findings of the Boundary Commission. Due, in part, to the international sanctions, the Eritrean economy is in a dire state, which further benefits Ethiopia: with fewer resources left, the potential for Eritrean mischief has diminished.

Another hugely beneficial aspect for Ethiopia is the fact that, compared to the instability in Somalia, Ethiopia can style itself as the regional bulwark of stability in an otherwise extremely chaotic and insecure region. This makes the country such a valuable ally to have for Washington. Ethiopia, in turn, can count on the goodwill of the US, which usually manifests itself in Washington looking the other way if the dictatorial regime of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi commits human rights abuses.

To be sure, the Ethiopia section of the State Department's 2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices duly lists "unlawful killings, torture, beating, abuse and mistreatment of detainees and opposition supporters by security forces, often acting with evident impunity; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of suspected sympathizers or members of opposition or insurgent groups; police, administrative and judicial corruption; detention without charge and lengthy pretrial detention; infringement on citizens' privacy rights, including illegal searches; use of excessive force by security services in an internal conflict and counterinsurgency operations; restrictions on freedom of the press; arrest, detention, and harassment of journalists; restrictions on freedom of assembly and association; violence and societal discrimination against women and abuse of children; female genital mutilation (FGM); exploitation of children for economic and sexual purposes; trafficking in persons; societal discrimination against persons with disabilities and religious and ethnic minorities; and government interference in union activities, including harassment of union leaders"<sup>335</sup> as serious human rights abuses in the country.

In practice, however, the Bush and the Obama administrations have resisted openly criticizing America's most valued partner in the Horn of Africa.<sup>336</sup> Unmoved by the crackdown of the Meles-regime against the opposition in the wake of the 2005 elections, in 2009 the congressional budget "allocated almost half a billion dollars of annual aid to Ethiopia, which doesn't include military and weapons assistance."<sup>337</sup> According to a report quoted by the Africa Research Bulletin, Addis was the third biggest African buyers of United States military armaments between 2005 and 2008 with a total of \$12 million [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/06].

When in March 2010 Ethiopia attempted to jam broadcasts of the Voice of America, the Obama administration "barely stirred itself to protest"<sup>338</sup>, noted *The Economist*. One reason for that, the newspaper speculated, was "that the Pentagon needs Ethiopia and its bare-knuckle intelligence service to help keep al-Qaeda fighters in neighboring Somalia

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<sup>335</sup> Department of State 2010.

<sup>336</sup> The Root: „Ethiopian Diaspora Frustrated by U.S. Policy”, 12 May 2010, <http://www.theroot.com/views/ethiopian-diaspora-frustrated-us-policy>

<sup>337</sup> The Root: „Ethiopian Diaspora Frustrated by U.S. Policy”

<sup>338</sup> The Economist: „Forget about democracy”, 27 March 2010

at bay. Many of Washington's aid people argue that, though Mr Zenawi is no saint, he still offers the best chance of keeping Ethiopia together."<sup>339</sup>

This is not to say, that Washington completely turns a blind eye to developments in the country: in late 2007, the House of Representatives passed legislation condemning human rights abuses and lack of democracy in Ethiopia, for example. After the 2010 elections in Ethiopia, Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson said with carefully wrapped criticism that the US noted "with some degree of remorse that the elections there were not up to international standards."<sup>340</sup> Carson, however, added that the elections were calm and peaceful and largely without any kind of violence, and "indicated that the United States would continue to press Meles to make democratic changes, but not at the price of endangering the alliance."<sup>341</sup>

Overall, most regional experts agree, that Washington and Addis Ababa have currently a mutually beneficial relationship, which neither side wants to risk losing. For the USA strategic interests would be at stake, as Ethiopia is its main ally in a region with otherwise US-skeptical regimes (Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia). For Ethiopia, losing the benevolence of Washington would mean the loss of financial aid, valuable military links and diplomatic support. All this means, that the USA is very criticizing Ethiopia's human rights record in order not to alienate it.<sup>342</sup> Ethiopia, on the other hand, tries to be indispensable for Washington, and one arena where it can do this is Somalia. For the US, it is paramount that a TFG-friendly regime sits in Addis Ababa. There is also strong cooperation between the security services, with Ethiopian experts providing a valuable contribution to the American surveillance of Somalia.<sup>343</sup> All in all, due to its services in Somalia, Ethiopia is too valuable an ally to lose for Washington. In short, thanks to Somalia, Ethiopia is to a huge extent shielded from official American criticism.

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<sup>339</sup> The Economist: „Forget about democracy”,

<sup>340</sup> Reuters: „US says Ethiopia vote not up to int'l standards”, 25 May 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE64O0TQ20100525>

<sup>341</sup> Reuters: „US says Ethiopia vote not up to int'l standards”

<sup>342</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.

<sup>343</sup> Personal interview, Nairobi, November 2010.



## 5.4. Uganda's foreign policy towards Somalia

In order to understand Uganda's foreign policy towards Somalia, it is important to sketch the history of the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) and its leader, the current President, Yoweri Museveni. The NRM was formed in 1981 as a rebel group against the then-ruling regime of President Milton Obote.<sup>344</sup> At the beginning, the NRM consisted of no more than 26 men, but thanks to its dedicated and highly disciplined leadership and the support of a large part of the population of the country, it was able to mount increasingly successful attacks on government troops.<sup>345</sup> By 1986, the NRM defeated the government and took Kampala. Museveni became President, and rules to this date. Important positions in the political and economical life were filled by former brothers-in arms of Museveni, such as his brother, Salim Saleh, who was army commander and senior presidential advisor on defense and security. The NRA became the national army.

On the political front, Museveni introduced a "no party" system, with only one supposedly nonpartisan political organization - the NRM - allowed to operate. This no-party system lasted until 2005. Since then, multiparty elections parliamentary and presidential were held, but they were easily won by the Museveni and the NRM. Museveni's rule has mixed results, but it has definitely brought peace (apart from the North, where the LRA rebels are still active), stability and a modicum of economic development in a country previously marred by instability and civil wars.

After the independence, the country followed a cautious foreign policy approach: "Uganda maintained friendly relations with Libya, the Soviet Union, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), and Cuba, although most of its trade and development assistance came from the West. In addition, though it consistently maintained its stance of geopolitical nonalignment, the fact that the NRM government accepted an IMF structural adjustment plan made it more politically acceptable to Western leaders."<sup>346</sup> Relations with the USA were especially good in the early nineties, when Museveni was lauded by the West as part of a new generation of African leaders.

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<sup>344</sup> For an overview of Uganda's history since independence, see: Mutibwa 1992.

<sup>345</sup> For a first-hand account of the so-called Bush War, see: Kutesa 2006.

<sup>346</sup> The Library of Congress: Country Studies – Uganda, <http://countrystudies.us/uganda/65.htm>

In its neighborhood, Uganda initially followed a policy of non-interference, even in the face of Sudanese support for Ugandan rebels.<sup>347</sup>

This cautious foreign policy approach changed in the nineties. Having consolidated his rule, Museveni was now ready to pursue the interests of the country (or his) in a more determined way. Uganda began actively to bring about political changes in the region: “Der Wunsch nach der Etablierung Uganda-freundlicher Regime in den Nachbarländern (Ruanda, Zaire, Südsudan), ggf. sogar der Herstellung eines alternativen Transitwegs zum Meer, ging dabei einher mit dem Export von Musevenis politischen Ideen und einer auf militärische Mittel vertrauenden außenpolitischen Strategie. Uganda vermochte mit einer liberalen Außenwirtschaftspolitik und einem Staatschef, der seit Beginn der 90er Jahre den Prototyp des neuen ‘aufgeklärten’ afrikanischen Präsidenten verkörperte, nicht nur alle Geberländer auf seine Seite zu ziehen. Ihm kam auch eine zentrale Rolle in der US-Strategie der Bekämpfung islamischer Regime zu. Im grundlegend veränderten regionalpolitischen Kontext seit Mitte der 90er Jahre ist Uganda zu einem äußerst selbstbewußten außenpolitischen Akteur geworden.”<sup>348</sup>

The main adversary of this confident new Uganda in the 90s was Sudan, which at this time was led by a strongly Islamist regime of President Omar al-Bashir and his mentor Hassan al-Turabi. Sudan openly sponsored anti-Museveni rebel groups in Uganda (some of them Muslims). This put them on collision course with Kampala, which in its turn sponsored South Sudanese rebels. According to Gérard Prunier, the desire to clean up the anti-Museveni rebels based in the DRC motivated Kampala to take part in the Congo wars 1996-2003, first against President Mobutu and then against Laurent-Désiré Kabila.<sup>349</sup> In the event, Uganda long overstayed its welcome in the Congo, and, after routing the rebels, officers in the military took to enrich themselves from the riches of the Congo.

In all these military adventures and foreign-policy dealings, President Museveni and his ruling clique displayed an enormous confidence and a drive to reform the region. Just like Eritrea’s President and ruling party, the Ugandan President and his inner circle

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<sup>347</sup> Prunier 2009: 80.

<sup>348</sup> Bellers-Benner-M. Gerke 2001: 696.

<sup>349</sup> Prunier 2004: 375.

emerged from a long and, in the event, victorious guerilla war. Having fought a bush war with the odds stacked firmly against him, Museveni has enormous confidence. According to a western diplomat, Museveni still sees himself primarily as a bush fighter, who takes quick decisions and seizes the initiative when a chance to further national (or personal) interests arises. Another expert opines that Museveni's political thinking is essentially still that of a military man.

But there is more to the foreign policy of Uganda than self-interested military adventures. Museveni also displays a deep sense of mission. Writing about the Ugandan engagement in the Congo wars, Prunier states, that "Museveni...cherished a certain image of himself as the elder statesman of eastern and central Africa. He had gone to war in the Congo partly because he saw himself as the lawgiver of post-cold war Africa, ready to "open up" the wild and primitive regions to the west of civilized east Africa."<sup>350</sup>. According to an op-ed article in the newspaper *The Monitor* in 2009, the NRM had an "idealistic tradition, which believed that they would take over power and bring about a fair, law-abiding, corruption free political order in Uganda"<sup>351</sup> and, later on, in East Africa.

In recent years, Museveni increasingly singled out Islamism as the main threat hindering his mission in the region. His thinking appears to be shaped by a Muslim/Christian dichotomy, in which the radical, Islamist tendencies are overemphasized. To some extent, this is understandable. As we have seen, Museveni had trouble with Muslim Ugandan rebels, and with the Islamist regime in Khartoum. As Museveni has often stated, the fight against radical Islamists is one of the chief reasons for its Somali engagement: "Somalia is now a central front in the fight against international terrorism. As terror networks are put under pressure in the Middle East, they are increasingly looking to exploit the opportunities presented by the instability in the Horn of Africa. Foreign extremists are already in Somalia, spreading their warped interpretation of religion. Just as the world came to regret leaving Afghanistan to its own fate in the 1990s, it would be a historic mistake to expect the war-weary Somali

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<sup>350</sup> Prunier 2009: 291.

<sup>351</sup> The Monitor: „What fate of Uganda's troops in Somalia reveals about our politics“, 09 December 2009, <http://www.diirad.com/news-in-english/437-what-fate-of-ugandas-troops-in-somalia-reveals-about-our-politics.html>

people to tame this global menace on their own... We will defeat those in Somalia who would keep a fellow African country from a future of stability and prosperity” – he wrote in the Foreign Policy magazine.<sup>352</sup>

Likewise, Museveni blamed “agents of mindless, cowardly Middle-Eastern terrorism”<sup>353</sup> rather than Somalis for the 11 July bombing in Kampala. In his view, “reactionaries from the Middle East and Central Asia” are trying “to impose a new colonialism on Africa.”<sup>354</sup> It is from this perspective, that Uganda’s continued diplomatic support for the moderate, anti-Islamist TFG must be understood. 10-12 per cent of Uganda’s population are Muslims, and the last thing Museveni wants is a Islamist government in Somalia, which could act as inspiration or sponsor for the disaffected Muslim youth in Uganda.

But is a missionary zeal to reform Africa and a crusade against Muslim fundamentalists enough reasons to explain Uganda’s engagement in Somalia? Probably not. As we have seen, Uganda has invested heavily in Somalia: it has lent diplomatic support to the TFG, sent its troops there, undertook training for Somalia government troops and hosts the EUTM mission. Kampala took great risk in exposing itself in Somalia: as we have seen, the country was repeatedly threatened with attacks by al-Shabaab. On 11 July 2010, the Islamists made good on their promise, killing more than 70 people in their twin-attack on Kampala. Further attacks can not be ruled out. Moreover, the AMISOM mission is being increasingly criticized by opposition groups, and is unpopular in the population. In short, the costs the Museveni regime had to pay for its Somali engagement are quite high.

But there are also benefits, the first of which is the fact that, with the AMISOM mission, the UPDF is kept busy. According to several experts, this is one of the main reasons for Uganda’s engagement in Somalia. As an army man, President Museveni has strong support in the military, which, in turn, was allowed to greatly enrich itself in the Congo wars in the nineties. In Somalia, there is nothing to loot, but the army benefits in several

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<sup>352</sup> Foreign Policy: „Somalia's Hour of Need”, 25 August 2010, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/25/somalias\\_hour\\_of\\_need](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/25/somalias_hour_of_need)

<sup>353</sup> The Monitor: „We Have a Right to Self-Defence, Says Museveni”, 25 July 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007250031.html>

<sup>354</sup> The Monitor: „We Have a Right to Self-Defence, Says Museveni”,

ways from the mission. Each soldier on duty in Mogadishu is budgeted to earn an average \$550 (about 1 million Ugandan shillings) each month, a huge sum in Uganda.<sup>355</sup> The salaries are provided by the international community. How much of the \$550 actually trickles down to the soldiers is questionable. According to sources on the ground, Uganda receives \$750 per month per soldier, which means that \$200 per soldier per month never reaches the soldiers.<sup>356</sup>

This amounts to \$1 million per month in sums lost. Of course, there is no transparent accounting for these monies, and it is widely thought that the defense ministry pockets a good amount of them. According to the Africa Research Bulletin, the total sum Uganda received annually for the stationing of 2,500 of its troops in Somalia was a hefty \$33 million, so there is ample room for well-connected individuals to get a share of the pie [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/07]. (In the meantime, the Ugandan contingent expanded from 2,500 to 5,200, so the corresponding sums have, presumably, exponentially increased.) But even without corruption, the international financing of AMISOM means that, in effect, a huge part of the Ugandan army is on the payroll of international donors. The Ugandan Treasury is therefore relieved from paying these soldiers, while they are on duty in Somalia.

The AMISOM mission also legitimized the vast expansion of the Ugandan military budget, projected to reach 600 billion Ugandan shillings in 2010 (US\$265 million), or 9.2% of the national budget [Africa Confidential 50/18]. (The UPDF has now about 25,000 fully equipped men and women.) The datasets of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute show a similar development: military expenditure in 2001 was 244 billion Ugandan shillings. In 2010, it reached 583 billion.<sup>357</sup>

Another obvious benefit stemming from the AMISOM mission is the fact, that Museveni renders a big service to the international community, especially the Western states, which fret about the situation in Somalia, yet would never station their troops there. With AMISOM, Uganda effectively secured the gratefulness of the USA. Apart

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<sup>355</sup> The Monitor: „AU Troops in Somalia Go for Six Months Without Pay”, 27 November 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911270917.html>

<sup>356</sup> Personal interview, Kampala 2010.

<sup>357</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: Military Expenditure Data, <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>

from Ethiopia, Uganda is Washington's most important ally in the region. Military relations are strong. For example, the US has provided \$135 million for logistical and equipment support and pre-deployment training for the Ugandan forces taking part in AMISOM.<sup>358</sup> The armies conduct joint military exercises.<sup>359</sup> From time to time, Washington commends President Museveni for his leadership and commitment to the peace-keeping mission in Somalia and sends sympathy to the government for the fallen soldiers.<sup>360</sup>

Separately, the Congress passed a law in May 2010 obliging Washington to use its resources and leverage to neutralize the elusive Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel chief, Joseph Kony [Africa Research Bulletin 2010/05]. The USA even has a small base ('forward-operating location') in Kasenyi [Africa Confidential 51/11]. In short, Museveni has positioned himself as an indispensable ally for the US "by providing the backbone of the 5,000-strong African Union Mission in Somalia...keeping eastern Congo stable, hunting the remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army and behaving tactfully about Southern Sudan's likely vote for independence next year."<sup>361</sup> Military relations with countries of the European Union are good as well, exemplified by the hosting of the EUTM mission.

For Museveni, it is crucial to maintain good relations with the West (military and otherwise). Uganda relies heavily on donor money: about \$800 million annually or 25 % of its total budget comes from donor loans and grants.<sup>362</sup> USAID alone disbursed \$417 million in 2009, with a planned increase to \$457 million in 2010.<sup>363</sup> This

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<sup>358</sup> Testimony of Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' Subcommittee on African Affairs, May 20, 2009, [http://www.operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/Senat-US-Carson-Testimony3\\_2009-05-20\\_.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/IMG/pdf/Senat-US-Carson-Testimony3_2009-05-20_.pdf)

<sup>359</sup> The Guardian: „US pledges \$246m in aid to Uganda”, 26 October 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/katine/2009/oct/26/us-aid-to-uganda>

<sup>360</sup> For example: New Vision: „US praises Museveni for Somalia role”, 21 September 2009, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/695365>

<sup>361</sup> Africa Confidential 51/14.

<sup>362</sup> Reuters: „Donors trim Uganda budget aid over graft concerns”, 10 August 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE67907620100810>

<sup>363</sup> USAID 2011a.

amounted to \$13 per person, whereas Ethiopia, the other main American ally received only \$10.4 per person in 2009.<sup>364</sup>

Apart from the fact that it is always good to have the world's remaining superpower as an ally, the strong relationship with Washington and the West has additional benefits for Museveni: to some extent, it essentially shields him from foreign criticism in domestic matters. This is echoed by several experts as well as, occasionally, by *The Monitor* newspaper, the biggest in Uganda. In an op-ed piece for example, it stated, that "many reasoned that the UPDF role in the mission was part of a scheme by President Museveni to buy favour from the West, and shield him the pressure over his push to amend the Constitution in 2005, which opened the door for him to be president for life."<sup>365</sup> A State Department report criticized the Museveni government over the election and media freedom in March 2010,<sup>366</sup> but when "US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Johnnie Carson, visited Kampala in May, he disappointed the regime's critics. It is said that a three-hour meeting did not include a demand for a new electoral commission."<sup>367</sup>

In February 2011, after the presidential and parliamentary elections in Uganda, the criticism from Washington was moderate. The Department of State said, that the "United States applauds the people of Uganda for their participation in the February 18 presidential and parliamentary elections, and congratulates President Museveni on his reelection. The elections and campaign period were generally peaceful, but we note with concern the diversion of government resources for partisan campaigning and the heavy deployment of security forces on election day."<sup>368</sup>

Overall, just as Ethiopia, Uganda can count on only mild criticism from the USA on its human rights record. Thanks to its valuable contribution in, among other issues, Somalia, Kampala is a key American ally. This relationship partly shields it from American criticism about its human rights record, which is another additional and valuable benefit for President Museveni's regime.

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<sup>364</sup> USAID 2011b.

<sup>365</sup> The Monitor: „What fate of Uganda's troops in Somalia reveals about our politics”,

<sup>366</sup> Department of State 2010.

<sup>367</sup> Africa Confidential 51/14.

<sup>368</sup> <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2011/02/156934.htm#UGANDA>



## Chapter 6: Findings of the paper

Having reviewed the Somali policies of the four analyzed states, we now turn to the key findings of this paper. At the beginning of our work, we postulated five statements about the relationship between Somalia and Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda. We now examine them one by one to see if they stand up to scrutiny:

*(1) We postulated that living in the neighborhood of a failed state (in our case Somalia) is highly disadvantageous in terms of security and stability for the surrounding countries (in our case Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda).*

This statement is only partly true. It is clear, that, on occasions, the war in Somalia affected the security of the analyzed states adversely. This was clearly the case when al-Shabaab attacked Kampala in July 2010, or, earlier, when the ICU declared *jihad* on Ethiopia in 2006. Yet, as we have seen, this is the exception rather than the rule. During most of times, the conflict parties in Somalia are busy to strengthen their inner-Somali standing and power base. When attacking the surrounding countries, these actions tend to be localized, mostly around the common border of Somalia/Kenya and Somalia/Ethiopia. There are no signs that al-Shabaab would attempt an all-out attack on Kenya or Ethiopia, nor has it the capacity to do so. Terrorism activity by al-Shabaab is very much taking place in two of the countries (Kenya and Uganda), yet there has been, to date, only one deliberate terrorist attack attributable to the group. Moreover, Eritrea's security has been largely unaffected by the instability in Somalia. It seems that Somalia does not present a constant and grave national security threat to its neighbors. The state failure in Somalia, lasting for twenty years, is a chronic phenomenon, yet that does not mean that it is threatening its neighbors all the time. Rather, it produces threats only from time to time, with these threats occasionally flaring up and then dying down. The situation in Somalia is nevertheless a significant security concern for the four countries, but at most of times, it is not an ever-present lingering threat, rather than a constant concern, containing which is tying up the capabilities of the surrounding states. In short, it is definitely disadvantageous to live with a failed state, but, in the case of Somalia, to a lesser extent than previously imagined. As of yet, the state failure in Somalia has not

led to regional security destabilization on the scale of West Africa and the Great Lakes region in the 1990s.

*(2) We presumed that the economic costs for the states of the region caused by the state failure in Somalia hugely outweigh the benefits.*

This statement, though hard to quantify and answer definitely, is only partly true. The only state out of the analyzed countries with which Somalia has close economic links is Kenya, so it would be foolhardy to think that our analysis settles this huge question once and for all. But analyzing the Kenyan example led us to surprising findings. To be sure, there are huge economic costs for Kenya: the caring for the refugees, smuggling and the influx of illegal money from Somali piracy and warlord activity are all problems. But it is important to point out, that the Kenyan state and consumers benefit greatly from Somali business activity and investment in Nairobi, which probably would have never occurred on such a scale had the Somali state never collapsed. As we have shown, Somalis are active in a wide range of sectors, ranging from transport to retail and construction. Cheap products sold by Somali traders make life easier for Kenyan customers. Crucially, the growths of GDP and tourist arrivals do not seem to be greatly influenced by occurrences next door. In fact, the bilateral trade is growing rapidly. Summing up, it is perhaps impossible to measure exactly the overall cost and benefit-ratio for Kenya. But, rather than focusing only on the negative effects, we should simply realize that Kenya does benefit from the current situation in Somalia.

*(3) We supposed that the four analyzed states are all interested in contributing to stabilize the situation in Somalia*

This statement is also only partly true. Eritrea, for one, used the Somali civil war for its own ends, fuelling the flames according to its own interests. This suggests that rather than naively assume that all countries in the neighborhood of a failed state want to see peace, we should see that some are interested in the opposite. Eritrea, as not being adjacent to Somalia, is barely affected by the negative consequences of the conflict, so it can allow it to fester. Ethiopia and Kenya are much more strongly affected by the Somali civil war, which would suggest that they want to see peace in Somalia as soon as possible. Yet as we have seen, they do not want to pacify Somalia by all means. Rather,

they want to bring peace on their own terms and according to their own interests. This meant supporting power groups (TFG, ASWJ, warlords) only if they were friendly to them. This suggests that the threat emanating from Somalia is not big enough to compel surrounding states to seek peace there *at any price*. The situation there is of concern, but the threats are not grave enough to warrant a peace deal which might possibly be at odds with the perceived short-term interests of Addis Ababa or Nairobi. This concurs with our finding (1), which argued similarly.

We should also not forget that the capability of outside states to influence the situation seems to be, by and large, quite small. Despite the strong diplomatic and military backing of three powerful states in the region (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda), plus the USA and the EU, the TFG 2.0 is still largely ineffective and controls only a small part of the country. Obviously, the current level of engagement of outside actors is not enough to decisively shape the situation inside the country. This leads to two other findings: we do not believe that the civil war in Somalia is caused only by the malevolent meddling of the analyzed outside states (a frequent claim by Somalis). While they occasionally contributed to the worsening of the security situation in Somalia, they can not be blamed for the whole affair. The other finding is that we have to realize that outside actors have generally only limited capabilities to influence the situation in Somalia.

*(4) We postulated that the four analyzed states influence the situation in Somalia according to their interests.*

This turned out to be, by and large, right. This statement is, of course, barely controversial. But while it is absolutely obvious that states act according to their interests, somehow Western policymakers working on Somalia tend to forget about this and suppose that every state in the region wants to stabilize Somalia as soon as possible. As we have seen in finding (3), the picture is definitely more complicated. A comprehensive peace plan must factor in the interests of the surrounding states if it wants to be successful. A peace deal without their support is unlikely to pacify Somalia. As we have also seen, the influencing of the surrounding states can at times be absolutely detrimental for peace. In Eastern African politics, interests definitely trump ideals.

*(5) We postulated that the states of the region have successfully found a modus vivendi with Somalia, one in which they strive to minimize the threats and problems coming from Somalia while working to reap the possible benefits.*

This assumption turned out to be true. Sometimes admirably, the four states indeed found ways and means to achieve huge benefits from the sad state of Somalia. “Thanks” to state failure in Somalia, Uganda and Ethiopia, in particular, could render valuable services to the Western world. In turn, to some extent, America turned a blind eye to the human rights abuses of the respective regimes. As we have seen, because of the situation in Somalia, Kampala and Addis Ababa could show their importance for Washington. The Somali quagmire also allowed Ugandan President Museveni to expand its army and channel international funds for the AMISOM mission to the pockets of the regime. Kenya, in turn, learned to keep the al-Shabaab mostly in check by accommodating it in the country while also benefiting from the economic activity of Somalis in Kenya, as shown in Finding (2). Eritrea also identified interests which could be pursued by meddling in Somalia. Especially, Asmara wants to remain a player in the region not to be ignored. The support for al-Shabaab guarantees a valuable bargaining chip. Bearing all this in mind, we have to realize that the four analyzed countries are extremely astute in adapting to the ever-changing situation in Somalia.

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