

**Fact Finding Mission Report On Somalia, 16 Feb – 14 April 2007**  
**By W.J. Kennedid & B. Mahamud**  
**On behalf of IKV Pax Christi – The Netherlands**

"In June 1974, a few of us spent some days in Mogadishu, Somalia, as members of an ANC delegation (...). This was the first and last time I visited Mogadishu. For many years afterwards Mogadishu and Somalia remained in our memories as African places of hope for us, a reliable rear base for the total liberation of Africa, including our liberation from apartheid. (...)

The fact of the matter however is that in time Somalia fell apart and ceased to exist as a viable state. This has led to the eventuality that, as the year 2007 began Somalia put itself firmly at the top of the African Agenda. Whereas in 1974 all our liberation movements and independent Africa counted on Somali support to achieve the goals of the African Revolution, in 2007 Somalia needs the support of the rest of the African Continent, again to achieve the goals of the African Revolution.

**Thabo Mbeki's 'Letter from the President' : ANC Today, 2007<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Thabo Mbeki's 'Letter from the President' : ANC Today - Volume 7, No. 1 • 12 - 18 January 2007.  
Go to: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2007/at01.htm>

## **CONTENT OF THE REPORT**

Preface

Map of Somalia

Executive Summary

CHAPTER I ToR and Implementation of the Mission

CHAPTER II Conclusions & Recommendations

CHAPTER III To end a war

CHAPTER IV The gender dimension

CHAPTER V Civil Society

CHAPTER VI Background

1. Understanding the conflict

2. Developments until 1993

3. Developments from 1993

CHAPTER VII UIC, TFG and Ethiopian troops

1. Union of Islamic Courts

2. Transitional Federal Government

3. Ethiopian intervention

CHAPTER VIII Regional and International involvement

References

Acknowledgements

Pictures taken during the mission

Annex 1

Annex 2

**PREFACE**

This report is about Somalia anno 2007 how we envisaged it on our mission for IKV PaxChristi in first months of 2007. We will highlight only in short – hopefully understandable for anyone who wants to learn about history of the nation – some details about its troublesome history and the complex clan situation in Somalia.

In the last 15 years there was anarchy and violence, and presidents came and went, there were powerless or corrupt governments and the rise and fall of the Islamic Courts, and the invasion by Ethiopian troops. There were peace agreements and national reconciliation conferences, and there was a flood. And still there is, poverty, hunger, corruption and a powerless government.

IKV PaxChristi engaged us to investigate answers as to the fundamental question what to do as a national Dutch peace organisation: to keep out as so far, or to get involved and engaged as in other parts of the Horn (namely Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan)?

We did our research from Febr. 16<sup>th</sup> until April 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 and hereby present the report of our mission.

Though we were confronted with, what we experienced to be, a dramatic humanitarian disaster on the ground due to the ongoing war and fightings, worsening the humanitarian situation due to the drought (in early 1996) and waterflood (Fall of 2006), we will not focus on the humanitarian needs, as IKVPaxChristi is not a NGO for humanitarian or developmental help: therefore it was our task to mainly focus on the socio-political aspects of the conflict.

However, because the humanitarian drama cannot be neglected totally, and because it is also related of course to the political situation, we will shortly refer to the work done by international actors and shortly comment on that.

We tried to concentrate on our own analysis of our own experiences of last months: we want you to read in our report what you cannot read already from books or what could have been written also in a European office in stead of in the heat of the gun fire, the despair as well as the courage of the people on the ground in the area of concern. Thus we will report on the basis of what people told us (how they analyse the conflict, how they judge who is good/bad, which expectations they have of the future) and how we analyse what we saw and heard (if the anarchy will last for another decade, if the UIC have a positive or negative role, if government is wished to survive yes/no, if international community as EU, NOVIB etc. play an important role according to the people or to the government yes/no, etc.).

For example: discussing with Somali intellectuals on the spot, who preferred to keep anonymous out of fear to be blamed for being bad Muslims or traitors of the nation, we clearly learned from them that the Somali conflict has multiple causes and cannot simply be seen as interclan rivalry or Islamism, but that factors must be identified as spoilers of Somalis strive for peace, as i.e competition for power and resources, availability of weapons, politicized clan identity and involvement of neighboring Ethiopia directly and through its proxy warlords.

We will mention specific facts that probably are find to be extraordinary – as e.g. like that there are Somali politicians with Dutch passport - , and we will illustrate our formal text with daily life stories - e.g. about risking extra control by police/army when using a cell phone because they fear that you are planning a terrorist attack.

And we will formulate conclusions and recommendations, all in reference to the actual situation anno 2007 as we envisaged it.

We sincerely hope we could contribute to open the windows of IKV PaxChristi for Somalia and vice versa Somalia's door for IKV PaxChristi .

Mogadishiu, April 2007

**B. Mohamud (1960, Mogadishu/Somalia)**, Dipl. Engineer (Gahayr University Somalia, Università di Torino Italy), Dutch citizen 1992-2000. Editor Warsan News (UK) and since 2003 working in Somalia with civil society NGO's (e.g. Somali Human Rights Defenders Network, Centre for Democratic and Human Rights, Centre Strategic Studies and Dialog).

**W. J. Kennedid (1959, Harar/Ethiopia)**, study Economics (Somalia), Dutch citizen 1983-2005. Freelance translator in Somali and Amharic languages (since 1987 in The Netherlands, since 2005 in UK), interpreter in various Dutch Courts of Justice, engaged as cultural expert Horn of Africa and African History expert in capacity building programmes for Dutch national NGO's (e.g. Vereniging Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland), community worker for Dutch-Somali community in Dutch municipality (Oss), working with civil society NGO's in The Netherlands (Dugsi Farsamo) and UK (e.g. Somali Environmental Action Group).

*Nuruddin Farah: "So what can be done? For starters, the international community must provide the wherewithal for the African Union to deploy 6,000 or so troops to keep the peace — soldiers who are not from Ethiopia.*

*But in the end, the only way out of the current impasse is to resume dialogue between the two principal parties to the conflict. I now know from personal experience how difficult this is. President Yusuf has said that the Islamists' claim to represent a religious constituency does not sit well with his administration. At the same time, the exiled Islamists are endorsing or openly engaging in violence. Assassinations of political figures, exploding roadside bombs in which peacekeepers or innocent bystanders lose their lives: these must stop.*

*Both sides must give. Most Somalis believe that the Islamists deserve a place at the table; they have been disempowered through invasion by an occupying force, which must withdraw, the sooner the better.*

*Genuine negotiations will not be easy. I found this out the hard way. But Somalis must consider the alternative: the violence will continue and the rest of the world will continue to use land as a playground for intervention". The New York Times, 26 May 2007.<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>2</sup> Go to: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/26/opinion/26farah.html>



Map No. 3690 Rev. 5 UNITED NATIONS  
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

*Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead*  
*Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°45, 26 January 2007*

## Executive Summary

A civil war normally comes to an end when the warring parties are totally exhausted and every one will then realise that their side can not win the war alone. In Somalia, it seems that this stage has not been reached yet, and there are some clans who still have the illusion that they can militarily defeat all other major Somali clans and monopolize power and privilege through the barrel of the gun.

Somalia's civil war could be ended if, first of all, Somalis respect each others differences and understand that no clan has the power to impose its will on the others, and, second, if the neighbouring countries of the afflicted country as well as the International Community have sincere strategic interest in stopping it.

Either of both is as yet a dream of the Somali civilians suffering from the ongoing conflict in Somalia or abroad, but it is a dream that can be fulfilled in a joint effort that acknowledges that future peace has to rely on compromise and needs a sincere and genuine involvement by domestic, regional and international actors.

The current **Transitional Federal Government (TFG)** seriously lacks credibility amongst the Somali people and is seen as the ones who can get control over the dramatic reality of violence, corruption and lack of any perspective to justice and democracy. The United Islamic Courts (UIC) for that reason were at first welcomed and indeed created a certain level of law and order, peace and stability for over six months in 2006.

However, when they turned to impose radical Islamism, people's support soon decreased and Somalis, being Muslims for centuries and cherishing their own cultural and religious heritage, felt radical Islamism would alienate them from their roots and heritage.

Thus, neither the TFG nor the Islamists can claim full people's support. Despite this, there is a strong and nationwide condemnation of the Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia in the Fall of 2006, which is generally experienced merely to be an invasion than an act of rescue (**Chapter 7**).

It is a mistake to approach the complex and multilayered Somali conflict in a simplistic way to the **Global War on Terror** as the International Community, at least the USA, tend to do and because of which they supported if not encouraged Ethiopian intervention in Somalia.

First of all one can say that the USA by encouraging Ethiopian intervention, inadvertently stepped into a local, tribal and regional political quagmire, and second that a genuine people's opposition against a temporary government that proved unable to bring law and order and which could have been seen as an in principle constructive force for conflict resolution, got neglected because political opposition got falsely portrayed as primarily, if not only, an Islamist insurgency.

As does Ethiopia, Eritrea as well fights its proxy war via Somalia by encouraging IUC and dissident politicians of TFG to take refuge on its territory and strengthen opposition against Somalian alliance with Ethiopia (**Chapter 8**).

A **National Reconciliation Conference** is planned for coming 28th of June, 2007, in the capital city of Mogadishu. Ideally, such a conference should best be organised by a body that is trusted to be able for the enterprise and lead by independent mediators. However, the current TGF is the responsible organiser, whereas it clearly lacks credibility and neutrality as being itself a main stakeholder in the current conflict.

Besides this, there is a distrust that the agenda will not focus on the nations interest as a whole but merely on clan- and self-interest of the tribal leaders, and foreign interests as of neighbouring states or of international (super-)powers. The formula that the TGF dictates of participating on the basis of being a clan representative more then a representative of a political party or organisation formed along ideological lines, is disputed amongst the Somali people: some see this formula as a means that is according to the **Four-Point-Five (4.5) formula** that divides power on the basis of clan and aims to prevent political groups as UIC to revive. Others deny the formula is useful and term it 'an infamous 4.5 tribal formula' which revives tribalism.

However, all are of opinion that it must be kept in mind that tribalism and the restoration and running of national government are very incompatible. Inside and outside of Somalia, one might argue if it is wise to better boycott the conference or, on the contrary, to participate notwithstanding the fact TGF organises it.

Considering the fact that the conference will take place anyway, participating and contributing in aiming to, if possible influence but at least monitor the discourse and outcome of the conference, is strongly recommended by us and by many of whom we met on our mission (**Chapter 3**).

The mechanism 'We cannot trust the government so we trust in Allah!' is a mechanism that is said to be true also amongst orthodox Christians (in e.g. Ethiopia) or fundamentalist Hindus (in e.g. India) and people of other faith. Somalis mention a second and specific mechanism: 'We are divided by clan-rivalry and tribal powersharing, corruption and psychological misery, so what unites us is our heritage of a shared religion Islam.' However, an alienation was felt by the Somalis who are well aware of their Somali heritage but became confronted with an Islamization of their culture and society infrastructure due to radicalisation in UIC after the first months of creating peace, law and order (**Chapters 6 and 7**).

It is important to understand that the political constitution of Somali society lies not in the centralised political institutions of a Western model, but in a particular social system of a pastoral people, where the traditional notion of 'Xeer' - which can be described as a 'contract' between lineage groups, combining both Islamic sharia and customary law - regulates political and economic relationships between pastoral kinship groups rather than a central polity.

The 'Xeer Somali' is the traditional mechanism for resolving, managing, or mitigating conflict. The fundamental question anno 2007, in regard of peace-making and the reconstruction of Somali civil society, is to which extent the traditional values, as expressed in the Xeer, have been lost during 21 years of military rule and four years of civil war. In short: if this model anno 2007 still usable is for conflict resolution. It is a strong belief among many Somalis that future peace and stability cannot grow until people rebuild their relations of trust and cooperation from the grassroots upwards as was the tradition of Xeer Somali in former days.

As an inspiring example and prove of how 'Xeer Somali' can be the basis of conflict transformation, many Somalis refer to the experiences of Somalis in Somaliland and recall to the way an outbreak of fighting in early 1992, shortly after Somaliland declared its independence, was brokered by the elders, and how in May 1993 a national reconciliation conference was concluded and a new government elected. This all happened on own territory and without foreign intervention (**Chapter 6**).

In May 1990, over 100 prominent Somali citizens, including the first civilian president of Somalia (Aden Abdulle Osman), a former police commander (General Mohamed Abshir), cabinet ministers, ambassadors, civil servants, religious leaders, elders and businessmen (including Ali Mahadi Mohamed), signed an open letter ('Manifesto No 1') condemning the policies of the regime, and calling on the government to accept a process of discussion with opposition groups to bring about a lasting solution to the political turmoil.

The **Manifesto Group**, as a coalition of various sections of civil society was, despite their weak political influence, an interesting and valuable initiative, showing the preparedness of individuals who genuinely care about the future of Somalia, to cooperate irrespective of personal or political alliances or individual agenda's. The question to be studied is if such an initiative could be thinkable and successful anno 2007? Could a like wise group be formed anno 2007 (**Chapter 6**)?

The **Somali women**, being the ones who earn the money (on streets and markets) and take care of the families (for food, psychological and physical health) are of vital importance for survival of Somali society. On the one hand, many of the women are strongly aware of the political context they have to cope with, mainly thanks to civil society activism. It proved as well that many women had expressed their support for the UIC when they arose. One of the reasons for this was the fact that especially women are confronted with the dramatic consequences of war and anarchy, and welcomed the UIC when they took care of law and order to suspend the anarchy and insecurity (**Chapter 4**).

The absence of a central government has resulted in a situation in which most public institutions are dysfunctional and many de facto existing ones have narrow and weak legitimacy. This absence of

government has however provided **NGOs and the private sector** with opportunities to venture into areas of social development in which they have had no comparative advantage or experience. In the Republic of Somaliland, that declared independence in 1991, civil society conferences (e.g. by NOVIB) were organised to encourage and train civil society activists to take a role in shaping their socio-political future.

Somaliland feels itself to be an independent state though no country recognized it as such (but merely as a breakaway from Somalia), and knows a relative peace since over a decade. Exchange lessons learned to see how civil society in Somalia could profit from this experience and, as international civil society, get involved on the ground in Somalia as well, is highly recommended (**Chapter 5**).



<b>CHAPTER I - Terms of Reference and Implementation</b>
--

### Terms of Reference of the Fact Finding Mission to Somalia<sup>3</sup>

1. The FFM aims to investigate the status quo of national/regional/international political affairs in Somalia and to provide IKV Pax Christi with information about the state of affairs that is acquired 'in the field'/ 'on the ground' and thus improve IKV Pax Christi's knowledge and understanding of this part of the Horn of Africa. The FFM needs to clarify in specific the importance / role of clan and religion.

*So far, IKV Pax Christi is not familiar with the Somalian status quo, though it is fully acknowledged that the Somali situation influences perspectives for peace in neighbouring countries (Ethiopia, Eritrea, e.a.) where IKV Pax Christi is engaged, and vice versa. For IKV Pax Christi, Somalia is, so to say, 'a blank spot' in the Horn. Reports and books are published on Somalia and are already important sources of information. The FFM however aims to come to disclose 'the blank spot' by field research.*

2. The FFM aims to enable IKV Pax Christi to frame its own position in regard of the status quo in Somalia and the ways to come to stabilisation and peace, and to judge the position of other relevant international actors, as e.g. the ICG (analyses and proposals in their recent report 'Somalia; The Tough Part Is Ahead') and EC (analyses and proposals as given by European Commissioner Michel: e.g. see attached interview).

*ICG, EC, e.a. they all propose solutions to the conflict, but are these solutions desirable? Are they feasible? If so, under what conditions? If not, which alternative solutions are to be proposed according to (the various sections of) Somali society in the very area of concern?*

3. The FFM aims to serve IKV Pax Christi in its mission to contribute to peace processes in conflict - areas as in casu the Horn of Africa and to therefore influence Dutch national Foreign Affairs policy.

*Dutch NGO's (NOVIB, CARE) and Europe (ECHO) is involved in Somalia already for years, but Somalis 'on the ground' in the very area complain that these NGO's do not deliver satisfactorily. What is their work and does IKV Pax Christi have a role to play as well, e.g. empowering local civil society / local peace actors? If so, what to do to empower them?*

4. The FFM aims to identify key players and the people's support and expectations: who are the key players, to be mentioned in specific: the TGV (government), the UIC (islamist opposition) and warlords (political opposition) and the international powers (USA, Ethiopia, Europe, Russia, e.a.) . More in specific, the FFM aims to get clearance on the question if IKV Pax Christi could be of relevance for Somalia; if so, why and how and what for? And is it possible to identify local partners (NGO's) for future alliance with IKV Pax Christi, or for joining the Pax Christi Greater Horn of Africa Network\*?)

*\*) The network described its goal as: 'To consolidate our efforts to address the multitude of challenges to contribute to reconciliation and peaceful co-existence in the region in particular and the continent in general'.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Abstract of the full text of the ToR, that in its full version includes preface, attachments and budget.

## Implementation of the FFM: sources, tools and reporting

### Timetable and regional outreach

In between Febr. 16<sup>th</sup> and April 14<sup>th</sup> we scheduled out meetings in the cities of **Bosaso** (Puntland, home province of President Abdullahi Yusuf), **Baidoa** (residence of the Transitional Federal Government) and **Mogadishu** (capital city suffering from attacks and counterattacks by Islamists, government forces and Ethiopian troops) and surrounding locations as e.g. Afgoye) in our programme.

In especially the last week of March and first weeks of April it was hardly possible to move out of house and go on the streets, where air strikes and heavy artillery prevented civilian movements and where piles of dead bodies lay waiting to be collected and be buried.

We distributed questioners (about three pages, 25 questions) to: Ministers and member of parliaments (TFG), warlords, civil society representatives (humanrightsdefenders, peace activities, advocates, women, youth, lawyers, e.a.) and by direct interview to the residents of the cities we visited.

Meetings were arranged on our request by activists of local and national networks. We travelled by car (to Baidoa and in Mogadisciu) and by air (Puntland) which mostly was very risky due to the armed struggle and the crime and chaos alongside to it. Bad roads not only meant long and hot travel hours but also prolonged exposure to danger, especially if one has to drive slowly...

Planning a strict program was not possible due to closure of roads and airports when tensions rose: we nonetheless managed to reach Puntland and have meetings there, but we had, unfortunately, to cancel the planned visit to Ethiopia for the briefing on the IKV PaxChristi 'Greater Horn of Africa Network' that took place in April 2007 in Addis Abeba.

### Program of meetings

Various meetings with activists and experts on human rights, e.g. the meetings with the Mogadisciu based Somali Human Rights Defenders Network (SOHRIDEN), with Ahmed M. Ali and his team: we discussed their role and opinion as civil society actors on the ongoing wars. And the Baidoa based 'ISHA BAYDAUA' (20 March), with whom we discussed amongst other subjects, their view on Islamism and its significance on contemporary Somali society (that is: culture, politics, language, judiciary, etc.). We recorded this meeting by video film (Somali spoken).

Various meetings with women's organisations, of which especially to be mentioned are the event in Baidoa (8 March), which is also recorded on video-film and was the celebration of International Women's Day in presence of, amongst many other women, the Minister of Women-Affairs, and the meeting in Mogadisciu (19 March) with Sadiya A., Warsan G. and Gariya T., being amazingly active women activists with whom we discussed the consequences of the conflict for women and their analyses of the current situation.

Various meetings with Somali intellectuals, as in Mogadisciu (25 March) with Hassan Gabre (engineer), C Raxman (lawyer), Abdi Ali (journalist), and others. We discussed about the socio-political situation of Somalia in general and about the current socio-psychological problems the people encountered in specific.

Various meetings with elders as e.g. with Hawiye Elders (Mogadisciu, DATUM): we discussed their role as elders to be traditional peace brokers as in Xeer Somali and, being representatives of the largest clan in the capital city of Mogadisciu, their analysis on the conflict and the perspectives on conflict-resolution

We attended public gatherings of, and had interactions with Members of Parliament (TFG) and warlords and others who had (or claimed) formal or informal influence and power; for security reasons

we will refrain of details about persons and locations, what we learned from these encounters is part of the larger text of our report.

It was not possible to meet international representatives in the time of our mission in Somalia: they were either evacuated due to the worsened violence on the ground, or stayed in strongly isolated and often secret locations outside the area.

### Communication and Reporting

Unless security prevented us to do so, we recorded events and meetings on video-film and DVD, took pictures and used handwritten note books. Phone and internet were fairly regular available. Use of cell phones outside on the street, or in a car, was often discouraged or even prohibited by police out of suspicion the owners/users would be planning 'terrorist attacks' while calling...



**Facts Finding Mission discussing and interviewing different social Classes in their Office**

## CHAPTER II - CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### **TFG and the 4.5 FORMULA**

Nationwide the TFG lacks trust and credibility according to the majority of the Somali people, especially intellectuals and civil society organisations. The intervention of Ethiopia in support of the TFG resulted in a nationwide condemnation of the TFG for being 'subservient' to the Ethiopian and American interests.

Those who support the TGF are either of opinion that there is no other way to do so, or are presumed to have direct profit of TGF's corruptive and tribal policy. The second attitude often results in self interest and criminal economy. The first is close to a fatalist attitude but might be transformed in support of civil society as new actors in drafting and building a future.

Somalis differ in opinion in regard of the 4.5 formula, if this is a healthy basis for working on reconciliation and on creating democratic structures as a government, a constitution, e.a.: some, in particular the politicians, say it is a good instrument to use because it is simple and clear, which is very important when it comes to something so sensitive and important as power sharing.

Others, in particular the intellectuals, however state that applying the formula will keep Somalia divided on tribal basis and will not encourage nor permit the people to put shared national interest (as economy, health, education, etc.) above tribal interests. They propose political parties or political organisations formed along ideological lines and not o the 4.5 formula.

#### Recommendation:

Acknowledge, as international community, the weakness of the current government, discuss the merits and the objections in regard of the 4.5 Formula and contribute to education and awarenessraising courses of civil society in regard of the planned national elections in 2009, when the current administration's mandate is due to end.

#### Recommendation:

Whereas it is important to be aware of, and have knowledge about, the importance of 'clan' in Somalian history, politics and culture, it is important not to reduce analyses of conflict or conflict resolution 'clanwise' only. It is important to keep in attention individual people's experiences, opinion and perspective and prevent simplism by categorising a populace upon clan only.

### **ETHIOPIAN INTERVENTION**

Ethiopian troops were not simply only confronted with Islamists and radical militias but with a broad front of clans and groups that are hardly or not related to the Islamists but shared their perception and rejection of the Ethiopians as a joint enemy. The intervention by Ethiopian troops is nationwide perceived to be an 'invasion' of a foreign force on Somalian territory.

#### Recommendation:

Take care, as international community, that on the shortest term an AU mission can be implemented to replace the Ethiopians on shortest note.

### **INTELLECTUALS**

Intellectuals feel themselves confronted with the weak and failing authorities on the one hand (and observed as dangerous criticasters) and radicalised Islamises on the other (and observed as bad, or even anti- Muslims), which makes that they are not eager to play an explicit role in reconciliation and reconstruction of society despite the need of their input.

#### Recommendation:

It must be acknowledged by the international community and international civil society that the Somali intellectuals are in a specific sensitivity situation: without endangering them they have to be identified as actors for change to a future respecting genuine Somali heritage and exposing mankind as unique human being in his specific potentials.

## RELIGION

Somalis are Muslims since long and, as people of other religions also tend to do, when they cannot find solutions to their problems they turn to religion. The people's opposition against , and the lack of trust in the various governments of last decades, and people's genuine religious feelings are politicalised and 'hijacked' by Islamists who transformed the people's movement in an Islamist powerfactor . Thus, the anti-terrorism reflex was triggered that lead to Ethiopian intervention in Somalia, aiming to counter the rise of Islamists of the UIC, in late 2006.

### Recommendation:

a) support, as international community, also those sections of, or individuals in Somali society who do not adhere Islamization of education, culture and psyche of Somalia and its people, by enabling them to create an infrastructure (e.g. run private schools) that counterbalance the Islamist infrastructure  
 b) take as prominent account of the corrupted system of clan-rivalry and clan based powersharing, as well as the shameless corruption and dramatic lack of governance-capacity , as of the afore mentioned Arabization and Islamism.

### Recommendation:

Support civil society in community building and developing democracy from below. See as well the short list of recommendations formulated specifically in regard of civil society, in Chapter 5, Acknowledge the crucial role of women not only in their hard role as caretaker of family and breed, but also of provider of income and motor of current economy.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

To speed up the creation of a AU contingent on the politic and diplomatic level, and to avoid the suspicion that it operates under Western command instead of acting for the interests of the Somali people.

### Recommendation:

Diplomats of e.g. the EU have to get a more visible presence on the ground instead of mainly being present outside Somalia (Nairobi) or in remote premises that are inaccessible for Somali citizens and which deny the diplomats to taste the atmosphere in the city as input for their work.

On the NGO level international alliances should be formed with the Somali Civil Society to create a strong cooperation against violence, intimidation and anarchy, together with expanding or strengthening local alliances.

## NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE

It can be doubted if a National reconciliation Conference organised by an actor that lacks credibility amongst the people, can be fruitful and effective. However, it is recommendable to participate in the audience and thus be able to get first hand and , ideally also inside information in the process.

### Recommendation:

Be in principle positive about being presence in a reconciliation conference, but discuss with grassroots civil society conditions and means of the presence and prevent to be misused by any actor as the international crown on the work the eagerly seek credibility for.

Support civil society in implementing courses for the NGO's and for the people at large about what is at stake on the event and how to probably positively influence the debates by lobby or speech. Most of all however is: make sure participants can participate safe and without fear.

## CHAPTER III - To end a war

A civil war normally comes to an end when the warring parties are totally exhausted and every one will then realise that their side can not win the war alone.

In Somalia, it seems that this stage has not been reached yet, and there are some clans who still have the illusion that they can militarily defeat all other major Somali clans and monopolize power and privilege through the barrel of the gun.

Somalia's civil war could be ended if the neighbouring countries of the afflicted country (as especially Ethiopia, but Eritrea as well) as well as the International Community (as USA, EU and UN) and have sincere strategic interest in stopping it.

As happened in Uganda after the overthrow General Idi Amin's brutal regime in mid of 1980th whereby next-door Tanzania had intervened by force on a genuine peace enforcing agenda. Or as happened when Nigerian and West African regional grouping (ECOWACS) forces ended the civil war in both Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Unfortunately Somalia as yet lacks neighbours or friends in the international community who have such vital strategic interests in true peace in Somalia. On the contrary, the international community until very recently seemed to have turned its back to Somalia.

They have only become alert recently after the rise of the radical Islamist movements that restored some resemblance of peace to Mogadishu and its environment for few months. Unfortunately, the Islamists failed to restore true stability and in stead radicalized and turned to impose Islamism on the people and to limit political and civil space for opponents of their radicalism; thus they seriously frustrated a domestic perspective to peace.

The intervention by Ethiopian troops, aiming to give backing to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and defeat the Islamists' power (UIC), and, on the other hand, Eritrea's eagerness to give refuge to UIC and encourage TFG dissidents to form an opposition against the current government, disrupted the peace perspective even more severe.

### **National Reconciliation Conference**

A national Reconciliation Conference is planned for coming 14th of June, 2007, in the capital city of Mogadishu. Ideally, such a conference should best be organised by a body that is trusted to be able for the enterprise and lead by independent mediators. However, the current TGF is the responsible organiser, whereas it clearly lacks credibility and neutrality as being itself a main stakeholder in the current conflict.

Besides this, there is a distrust that the agenda will not focus on the nations interest as a whole but merely on clan- and self-interest of the tribal leaders, and foreign interests as of neighbouring states or of international (super-)powers. Inside and outside of Somalia, one might argue if it is wise to better boycott the conference or, on the contrary, to participate notwithstanding the fact TGF organises it.

Considering the fact that the conference will take place anyway, participating and contributing in aiming to, if possible influence but at least monitor the discourse and outcome of the conference, is strongly recommended by us and by many of whom we met on our mission.

As for Somali participants it is important that a large section of civil society can participate in safety and can express their views without fear for intimidation, and that the gathering acknowledges gender aspects of the conflict and proposed models of conflict resolution (see next chapters of this FFM report).

Foreign participants as diplomats, representatives of International Civil Society (e.g. IKV PaxChristi), e.a. would have to take care to be primarily concerned with Somalia's interests as a nation and not to succumb to eventual loyalties to the one or the other section of Somali society (clans, NGO's).

### **Future peace has to rely on compromise**

Why have previous fourteenth attempts in peace and national reconciliation failed?

The main reason is that there was really no focus on achieving lasting peace and national reconciliation, nor a full discussion of the roots causing of the conflict.

Despite a broad support for the idea of a reconciliation conference as such, there are doubts about its agenda.

Prime Minister Geedi wants to invite participants on clan-basis, not as representatives of a political body. E.g.: Islamists cannot participate as UIC adherents but only as representatives of their tribe. Geedi's instruction is explained as a means to prevent opposition against the TFG (e.g. of Islamists and warlords) to present themselves as organized bodies.

But, in reference to Geedi's format, one can also argue that the whole purpose of this conference is to bring power sharing along tribal line; the politicians who currently hold power behave as if government work is not a public service for the good of Somali nation but merely a bounty to be distributed to winning tribes of the battle.

While as we know, the fundamental problem with this approach is that the Somali nation consists of an endless number of clans, sub clans and even more sub clans. It would therefore be impossible to satisfy all the clans in terms of distribution of Ministerial portfolios and high government positions.

Such was the core problem of the National Reconciliation held in Nairobi in 2004, as the first cabinet of current Prime Minister Geedi was formed, with a total of 91 Ministers, State Ministers and deputy ministers, whereas the only super power in world today (USA) has got about 15 Federal cabinet members only.

In the past 16 years some Somali clans have been convinced – sometimes under the banner of Islamic religion – that they can subjugate and marginalize other clans by force. They have however failed to understand that no single clan can militarily defeat all other clans.

Somali can not be re-united on the terms of one clan: it is the people who have to respect each others differences and have to understand that no clan has the power nor legitimacy to impose its will on the others.

Future peace has to rely on compromise and we all have to understand there is simply no other way.

## ANNEX

For this chapter we got input via a wide variety of meetings. Find below the text of a 'joint statement' that was the fruit of one of those meetings.

### **Joint Statement on National Reconciliation Conference of the Somali Human Rights Defenders Network, Mogadishu dd 6 March 2007**

*A call for a national reconciliation conference within weeks which will be open to all clans in the chaotic country struggling to restore order was announced by President Abdullahi Yusuf: " We will start at national level and go down to local and regional levels, down to grassroots. Our people fought hard, we slaughtered each other, now we have to discuss how to forget and forgive."*

*Different reactions and perceptions from the Somali people have already been heard from the local media. **Somali Human Rights Defenders Network (SOHRIDEN)** held a meeting today in the HQ of SOHRIDEN, in presence of the FFM-team of IKVPaxChristi, and discussed the current situation of the country focusing mainly on the proposed reconciliation announced by the TFG president to be conducted in Mogadishu. As the TFG president proposes the conference will take two months and some three thousand participants would attend.*

*Participants from **SOHRIDEN** described the meeting as "important and significant" owing to the analyses, ideas and views exchanged with respect to the possibilities and future steps which need to be taken in order to renew the Somali National Reconciliation peace process. Of significant importance were the discussions on the process of the reconciliation program which needs more clarification on the criteria that specifies the participants and the Agenda of the conference. Also the main actors and the main conflict which caused the instability is not well defined. It was also discussed the understanding that this conference will yield an agreement that provides the Government addresses to its opponents the sensitive and the most crucial needs that they feel and caused the mistrust and conflict.*

*The current political conflicts must be successfully transformed and the main actors must be reconciled and develop good relationship between them, otherwise this conference leads to a failure as those conferences before.*

**Previous reconciliation Conferences**

Fourteen attempts to Somalia reconciliation conferences ended in failure and the international community desperately neglected Somalia for a period. Later the IGAD<sup>4</sup> countries initiative became the only productive conference and was held in Nairobi, Kenya, at which the TFG was agreed to. A document was signed by the major factions, entitled, 'Declaration on the Harmonization of Various Issues Proposed by the Somali Delegates at the Somali Consultative Meetings from 9-29 January 2004'. From this, the Transitional Federal Institutions were agreed to, including elections.

**The Transitional Federal Government and how they proposed the National Reconciliation Conference**

The government is planning a national reconciliation conference, although the date has repeatedly slipped, that would deal only with social issues. It argues the peace process that gave birth to the government was the political reconciliation.

**How the Somali people perceive this call for National Reconciliation:**

The desire of the Somali people for a lasting peace and security through national reconciliation is unambiguous. This call from the TFG is heard repeatedly throughout the country from all segments of the Somali society, who have consistently demanded seriously to end the hostility and violence. Unless this is realized, and the right methodology is applied the entire process of reconciliation, will end into a failure and if a solution that is not unanimously agreed is reached it would be jeopardized. One of the first responsibilities of Somalia's new transitional government is to recognize its opponents as the Islamic Union Courts, factions leaders who are not satisfied with the current policies and also the opponents inside the government councils like MPS and ministries. There is no clan conflict and tribal fighting in Somalia.

**What is exactly the current Somali conflict :**

The participants from both SOHRIDEN Network and the NEDRSOM after their discussion and analyses based on different data from Somalis in the Diaspora and those in the ground realized and agreed that the existing conflict in Somalia is political conflict which the power sharing is the outstanding question to be solved.

**Who are the main Actors and what criteria they should have.**

The participants from both SOHRIDEN Network and the FFM Team of IKVPaxChristi, grasping from the public opinion and the people's desire, concluded that the main actors are the ICU, faction leaders who have been segregated and drawn out of their ministerial positions because of their disagreement with the PM and the President's policies knowing that the TFG was established by the agreements from the faction leaders including the president and the civil society groups who are the only group that have a vision of peaceful Somalia and functioning government with democratic principles. But the interim president of Somalia Abdullaahi Yusuf Ahmed has emphatically rebuffed these calls saying his government will hold the national reconciliation conference for Somali clan rivals, not opposite parties.

**SOHRIDEN suggests :**

- The government should reconcile first with its varied constituents in its councils first .
  - The signatories of transitional federal charter who opposed the policies of the president have been isolated and removed from their positions
  - Forty two (42) members of the TFG are out of the country because of their beliefs and political differences
  - As they are claiming publicly through the media they are still insisting that laws violated by the Somali transitional federal government (TFG):
    - Bringing Ethiopian forces in the country without the majority approval of the Somali interim government clearly violates the UN Security Council Resolution 1725 which clarifies that troops from frontline states can not be involved in Somalia for a peacekeeping mission.
    - Clear infringement was made in the system of 4.5 in which the Somali government was formed.

<sup>4</sup> IGAD Regional body comprising Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Uganda, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia.



- *The selection of people nominated to administer provinces in the country breaches the Somali national constitution.*
- *The Somali government should negotiate with everyone or group that opposes it, and should know that the Somali people could resolve their own differences without foreign interventions: it is indispensable that the Somali government should give the reconciling Somalis greater freedom it should not press them or object who is to be negotiated with..*
- *The expected Somali national reconciliation conference must be attended by all Somalis inside and outside of the country and the government must not decide who should or should not attend the meeting.*
- *The statement declares that the right people for the meeting should be those who have the political decision inside and outside of the country so that the meeting happens successfully.*
- *The national Reconciliation conference should be inclusive and the participants should be the TFG, UIC, Business associations, Religious group, traditional leaders, civil society, Organized associations of the Somali Diaspora and one seen as a prominent figure and important to reconciliation conference.*
- *The civil society organizations should be given their role of mediation and the technicalities during the conference. Also they should be given of public awareness raising and consultations with the delegates to reach a lasting peace.*
- *The TFG should be ready to accept to make amendments with the current constitution and reconstitute the government cabinet with the main actors from its opponents if necessity compels to reach a final solution.*

### **Hawiye Community**

Today Hawiye Community conference requested from the International community before we closed our meeting the following points:

1. *The international community should concentrate more on forcing the Ethiopian government to withdraw its troops, who illegally occupied Somalia, out of Somalia. Their presence in the country would surely mount the instability in the country.*
2. *It should facilitate that a real national reconciliation meeting in which the government and its political oppositions should attend. The national reconciliation assembly should be held in a neutral place.*
3. *The international community should be cautious of funding and supporting a government which is tyrannous, as tyrannous governments that oppress their people are knowingly evading the world.*
4. *The international community should assist the weak starving Somali people who have been in civil wars and violence for the past 16 years.*

Somali Human Rights Defenders Network (SOHRIDEN)

Human Rights House, Mogadishu, Somalia. [www.shrdefenders.org](http://www.shrdefenders.org)



## CHAPTER IV - The gender dimension

It is important to ask ourselves how women are negatively affected by the conflict how changes in their situation lead, in many cases, to lower status, increased marginalisation, and abuse of their human rights. When looking at the ground situation in Somalia, the civil war clearly has different impact on the economic stability and survival strategies of women and of men.

The reality of Somalia women's experiences have to be taken in account explicitly, not only in respect of their specific human rights situation, but also to understand the women's support for either or none of the warring actors, be it UIC, TFG, warlords or whoever.

### Meeting with women organisations

We had several meetings with women activists and attended the 8 March celebration in Baidoa (residence of the TGF), that many women related to the current government attended (and which is recorded by us on video tape). From the meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> in Mogadishu we recall the following.

*Warsan: "An armed conflict involves everyone, not just armed protagonists, in the risk of increased violence. Women are as much prone to this danger as men: while the men are engaged in fighting, the women go on the streets to earn money and participate in local business on the markets and in the streets. They fulfill a role as providers of food and shelter for their families and as providers of income. In all this they have to take heavy physical risks as e.g. to be blown up by landmines or caught in crossfire. And whereas mobility is a key factor in personal survival, women may not be able to run away with the same ease as men, encumbered perhaps by pregnancy or by the need to watch over children, the sick or the old".*

She continues: *"There is also the fear of violence and rape that limits women's ability to go to market, work in fields, stand in queues for food aid, look for firewood, and so on".*

The phenomenon of elders' committees have always been an important factor in keeping communities together during wartime. It can indeed be said that the elders have the tendency to be old fashioned and that they seem not to accommodate women in their midst. However, due to the crucial role of the women as the ones who prepare the food, earn the money and take care of the families (amongst whom are also the elders themselves) the elders have no choice but to acknowledge the role played by women, although they won't show it publicly.

### Support for UIC

It proves that a vast majority of women expressed their support for the UIC when they arose. Women told us that this was related to the fact that especially women were and are confronted with the dramatic consequences of war and anarchy, and thus dearly long for order for the survival of all whom they care for and take care of. Some however told us that according to them women were and are more vulnerable to the rhetoric of the Islamists due to their illiteracy.

### Emergence of women organizations

Whereas violence and fear is in essence very destructive, it is a well-known mechanism that, at the same time, conflict often gives rise to new social configurations because of the need for mutual support and solidarity.

In the Somali situation the daily formal or informal gatherings united women who share similar experiences of hardship (varying from economical despair to sexual harassment), and some of them resulted in more formal women's organisations.

Such initiatives are encouraged by humanitarian organisations and their international donors, that often explicitly favour women as beneficiaries. Looking at the projects in former years of e.g. NOVIB, we see that a vast majority of the projects focuses on women

A concrete example is the NGO Somali Young Women Activists. SOYWA has implemented several activities in the areas of women rights, aiming to strengthen the protection of young girls, widows, children and the elderly. E.g. educating young women, especially the widows and those who have

been divorced in the long period of conflict; public awareness raising and advocacy for the rights of the underage marriage, e.a.<sup>5</sup>

Somali women should be recognized as potential peace- brokers and should be given the opportunity to fulfil a specific contribution in reconciliation and peace initiatives.

*Jos van Beurden (Dutch expert on Horn of Africa):*

*“The destruction they [the women, WJK/BM] encountered was so extensive that they had little choice other than to participate in the reconstruction. This led to the birth of a variety of local NGOs. Many of them quickly disappeared, while others turned out to be more enduring. Those which continue to operate are reported to have a relatively positive record in relief and rehabilitation. It is also remarkable that they are often focused on women. Women-owned NGOs were more visible and energetic in working for peace, building coalitions across faction lines and supporting health and nutrition programmes. In Mogadishu and Hargeisa women leaders set up extensive networks which had some impact in solving local conflicts, helped build bridges between hostile clan groups and encouraged the men to stop fighting and find alternative means of solving disputes. These initiatives were respected by both men and women. The Coalition of Grassroot Women's Organizations (COGWO) is working for peace via various women's organizations in Somalia, thus crossing faction lines and linking up grassroots women's groups at many levels. Working with the displaced and with those who have lost access to income and basic resources, these organizations also worked to mitigate the negative effects of conflict on communities”.*  
*From: ‘Searching for Peace in Africa’, 2000*

---

<sup>5</sup> More info on SOYWA see [www.sohriden.org](http://www.sohriden.org)

**CHAPTER V - Civil Society**

The absence of a central government has resulted in a situation in which most public institutions are dysfunctional and many de facto existing ones have narrow and weak legitimacy. This absence of government has however provided NGOs and the private sector with opportunities to venture into areas of social development in which they have had no comparative advantage or experience.

Somali civil society of today is characterized by a situation of perpetual conflict and political instability. For the last decade, the country has not had a clear system of law and order. The civil strife in Somalia is one of the main reasons for the relatively recent rise of NGOs in Somalia, which has also been determined by several factors.

First, the massive international response to the 1991-92 humanitarian crises had created a huge demand for intermediary local groups to assist international relief organizations in their operations. Second, the tendency of the international NGOs and agencies to collaborate with those local groups that were shaped in an NGO form has rendered NGO organizations fashionable. Third, employment gaps created by the disappearance of the government/public sector coupled with the insecurity-induced economic paralysis made the internationally-driven relief sector the most important employment and service provider in the country.

Finally, the total collapse of regulatory government institutions and policies have led to an ideal environment for an unchecked growth of voluntary entities.

Most of the NGOs that sprung up in the early years of the civil war were on-the-spot-created and individuated organizations that were doomed to perish at the end of the emergency period that coincided with the withdrawal of the UN-led intervention in Somalia in 1995. Nevertheless, almost five years after the UNISOM withdrawal, a substantial number of NGOs are still active in the relief and development field, the largest concentration being in Mogadishu. Often under-resourced and exposed to perpetual high-risk security situations, these NGOs are grappling with the challenging tasks of relief and rehabilitation.

Unlike the pre-war situation, the NGO sector has not only established itself as a major component of the Somali society, but it is also gradually diversifying itself with the emergence of new advocacy-oriented organizations. Since the failure of the UN-brokered reconciliation conferences, there has been a growing awareness among civil society members that they should play an active role in the warlord-dominated political process. As early as 1993, some NGOs to be known for having incorporated the initiating of civil society activities in its rehabilitation programmes. In 1995, other NGOs involving in peace building human rights conflict resolutions had started work in the field of social and political reconciliation moving away from the traditional arena. A year later, several other relief organizations, had embarked on a new course focusing on peace building.

In Mogadishu there is e.g. the CDHR (Center for Democracy and Human Rights), the network SOHRIDEN (Somali Human Rights Defenders Network) which unites 19 human rights organizations all over Somalia except Somaliland. They aim to 'implement a human rights culture' in the region by protesting against human rights violations of either side, as well as organizing workshops and seminars on human rights and good governance for the various sections of Somali society. Thus they, inter alia, organized workshops for warlords in last year 2006, capacity building trainings for NGO's, awareness raising and education for the youth and social empowerment courses for women<sup>6</sup>.

*The birth of the Somali Civil society organizations reflected this changing landscape on which Somali NGOs had been operating. The formation of Networking was the first initiative in Somalia since it brought together several active NGOs that had realized that peace was too vital to be left to the warlords alone. This CSOs, emphasized on the need to mobilize for true popular reconciliation and intended to give people's peace concerns a strong voice at both national and international forums.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Go to [www.shrdefenders.org](http://www.shrdefenders.org)

These organizations played a significant role concerning issues of promotion of human rights and democracy in Somalia while information sharing and institutional building was prioritized. The CSOs however realize themselves very well that they need capacity enhancement so as to operate more efficiently and effectively.

NOVIB Oxfam, was the first donor who used to help the emerged Networks like PHRN and COGWO. The program Coordinator of NOVIB<sup>7</sup> was praised by the Somalis for her unreserved efforts to promote CSOs in Somalia and Somaliland in former years. She organized for example a Somali Civil Society Congress about harmonizing the disintegrated Somali people, which was in February 2003 in Hargeisa, Somaliland<sup>8</sup>.

Unfortunately, those who have been working with international donors or NGO's primarily personally benefitted and diverted all resources to their own networks, due to clan rivalry and corruption, the complex features and mechanisms of which the foreign workers have only slight insight.

Since last decade, offices of the international NGO's were mainly based outside of Somalia, especially in Nairobi, Kenya, as are the offices of European Union and others. Indoor workers in those offices are mainly Kenyans and Somalis, who have to have strong moral ethics to withstand policies to discriminate on tribal base and not to fund only their friends and partners.

Despite it was well understood, acknowledging the violence and lack of technical infrastructure in Somalia itself, it is deplored by Somali civil society activists that foreign workers only seldom take residence on Somali soil, amongst the their local colleagues.

## Recommendations

In our meetings with Somali civil society organizations of humanrightsdefenders, journalists, women, youth, e.a. a diversity of ideas for support were listed and formulated to us in the form of the following:

### Our Recommendations to International NGO's (as e.g. IKV PaxChristi) appeal for:

1. Strengthening ties with and understanding of the prominent civil society organization and movements, since they will have information and insights about the situation of country or region
2. Further research the experiences of men and women living in 'on the ground' in various parts of Somalia, being in the capital of Mogadishu as well as in Puntland as also Somaliland; prioritizing the contracting of local and regional researchers for this task in stead of merely depending on satellite offices in neighboring countries.
3. Strengthening local CSO's consultants, trainers and experts for employment in conflict situations, which will enhance the likelihood of culturally sensitive gender-balanced perspectives being incorporated into planning.
4. Providing partnership between local civil society with international civil society and with donors that create opportunities to contribute to the design strategies and long-term planning aimed at social change.
5. At grassroots level, seeking out individuals holding moral and spiritual authority within the community, and who can become allies, and strengthening them in their work.
6. Exploring mechanisms whereby CSOs can establish dialogue with partners, so that mutual experience can be incorporated in their work and thoughts
7. Encouraging the development of ties and networking between partners on a regional or cross-regional basis.

<sup>7</sup> NOVIB was not contacted in this mission to give its opinion.

<sup>8</sup> See **The Somaliland Times, Issue 58, 1 March 2003**  
<http://www.somalilandtimes.net/2003/58/5803.htm>

## CHAPTER VI Historical Background of the Somali war

### Paragraph VI . 1 Understanding the conflict

Since the beginning of this century, there has hardly been a period when the Somali nation has not been in conflict with itself or with its neighbors. The cumulative effects of continual cycles of conflict on the development of Somalia and the lives of the Somali people must themselves be a cause of the recent conflict.

The Somali conflict is the result of a complex mixture of factors that include the legacies of European colonialism, the contradictions between a centralized state and a pastoral culture, the impact of foreign interventions as in the years of Cold War, the influence of neighboring countries as especially Ethiopia, ecological dramas as drought and flooding, the clan based politics and the lack of power-sharing with its wide scale corruption and human rights violations.

All of these can be identified in the analyses of this mission report, we, however, will not explicitly go in detail on all of them but will refer to the various sources that have been published already by many other authors and researchers.

#### Disputed figures

Somalia's population is estimated to be between 15 and 20 million, in majority living in urban areas and the south of Somalia, bordering Ethiopia and Kenya. The Somali people are permanently on the move, not only due to their nomadic and pastoral tradition, but also (if not, anno 2007, mainly) due to the ongoing violence and civil war. Thus it is very hard to specify exact figures and locations of where the people live or took refuge. For example: the Capital city of Mogadishu in previous days had some 750.000 inhabitants but became overcrowded by refugees fleeing drought and wars, whereas many for the same reasons left the city, as in last week of April 2007 when over 350.000 people sought refuge for the air strikes and war in the streets, whereas more than 5000 were killed.

These figures are disputed according to the government: the TFG talks about figures that are only a fraction of the ones humanitarian NGO's refer to.

#### Religion

Somalis are Muslims since long. They are one of the first to embrace Islam. Islam was and is a shared heritage of the people that was traditionally felt to unify the people in the spiritual sense.

In recent years scholars gained space and power, who exploit Islam and expose themselves as missionary groups or leaders, and dictate to their fellow Muslims what 'true Islam' is and, not satisfied with Somalis who worship Anno 2007 their faith as they did for centuries, want to 'Islamize' Somalis and transform them according to a format that was so far alien to Somalis. Whereas in the basic ethos of Islam concerns ethics as e.g. not to steal from one another, not to kill, e.a., the major focus of the Islamists that came to the fore front was on dress code of women, cultural conventions as music and dance, education of girls, e.a.

Arabic forms of Sharia laws were introduced to replace Somali Sharia, traditional Somali culture became altered by Arabisation through Islamism.

However, whereas Islamism is an ideology that truly endangers traditional Somali cultural heritage, Islamisation is not the single or foremost obstruction for peace in the Somalia of today: the corrupted system of clan rivalry and clan based power sharing alongside shameless corruption and a dramatic lack of governance capacity has to be taken in account as prominent as Arabisation.

#### A war economy

Despite the country's possession of raw materials as oil, minerals like iron, gold and diamantes, and a 3.300 KM long coastline, people are not benefiting from this natural wealth due to lack of good governance and the disastrous civil wars until these days.

The majority of the people used to live a pastoral nomadic existence, as Somalia in the main is a semi-desert region, with agriculture in the valleys in the north and in the area between the two rivers Shabelle and Juba in the south. However, crossborder war over pastoral grounds (in Ethiopia), domestic anarchy and international arms trade changed this traditional economical structure in a war-economy in which corruption flourishes and in which a large section of the former pastoral population from middle Somalia came to the capital cities in the south, claiming top positions in politics and modern (war-)economy.

The Somali-speaking people form one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. They belong to the Cushitic group of peoples, which includes the Afar, Oromo, Saho and Beja peoples of the Horn. The Somali are distinguished by a shared common ancestry, a single language, an Islamic (Sunni) heritage and a way of life that is overwhelmingly pastoral.

As Cushitic-speaking family or 'nation' of people, the Somali people are living dispersed throughout the Horn, from the Awash Valley in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east, and from Djibouti in the north till northern Kenya as far as the Tana river in the south.

The Somali are divided into six 'clan families'-Dir, Issaq, Darod, Hawiye, Digil and Rahanweyne-which are further divided, according to agnatic descent, into subsidiary clans or lineage groups.

### **Concept of nation state**

Until the colonial period the Somali 'nation' did not form a single political unit; any concept of political identity was based on clan affiliation. It was only when the Ethiopian empire and the colonial powers of Britain, Italy, and France divided the Horn and the lands of the Somali peoples into five states (being: British Somaliland; Italian Somalia; French Somaliland (Djibouti); the Ethiopian Somali land ('Ogaden'); and northern Kenya) and the Somali Republic was subsequently created, that the concept of a Somali nation state began to grow.

The international colonial borders that separate Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and northern Kenya make little reference to established territories of the Somali pastoral clans.

Of particular importance are the Haud grazing reserves ceded to Ethiopia by Britain in 1954. Since independence, irredentist policies to reunite the 'lost' Somali territories have been one of the driving forces of Somali national politics.

### **Centralizing political rule**

It used to be commented that Somalia was unique in Africa, being a state founded upon a single ethnic group-the Somali-who occupy a contiguous territory and share a common ancestry, a single language, an Islamic heritage, and a way of Life that is overwhelmingly pastoral. It is therefore difficult to understand why an apparently homogeneous society should be wrecked by such internal conflict. Conflict between people of different cultures seems more understandable. Until the colonial period, however, the Somali people did not form a unitary state.

One of the main legacies of European colonialism was to graft a system of centralized governance on to the highly decentralized and egalitarian political system of a pastoral people. Subsequent civilian and military governments attempted to create a unitary Somali State, by turning corporate responsibility away from sectional kinship loyalties towards the State.

There was never a centralized Somalia before 1960: the unity of the Somali was not vested via a central government but by sharing the same language, religion, culture and territory, whereas every group had its own tribal chief (Ugas, Malaq, Sultan, Garad) who had collaboration via de system of 'Xeer Somali' (as explained in further paragraphs).

The development of centralized government structures reached its peak in the repressive regime of Siad Barre in 1969 (until 1991). Major General Siad Barre came to power in a bloodless military coup in 1969. He disempowered the traditional chiefs and replaced the 'Xeer Somali' by introducing a centralized, authoritarian military dictatorship, which he covered though with socialist ideology.

### **Xeer Somali as traditional mechanism of mitigating conflict**

It is important to understand that the political constitution of Somali society lies not in the centralized political institutions of a Western model, but in a particular social system of a pastoral people, where the notion of a 'social contract' ('Xeer') regulates political and economic relationships between pastoral kinship groups rather than a central polity.

'Xeer' can be described as a 'contract' between lineage groups, combining both Islamic sharia and customary law. It defines the obligations, rights, and collective responsibilities of the group. Within the terms of this 'contract', members of a group are expected to support each other. The xeer lays down the rules of corporate responsibility, and is a source of protection for both individual and group rights. The 'Xeer Somali' is the traditional mechanism for resolving, managing, or mitigating conflict.

It is a feature of this system that at any time one group may stand in opposition to another. The balance of opposing groups provides the 'fundamental source of order and security' in Somali society. The effort to achieve this balance leads to the shifting political alliances that are a common feature of Somali politics. The balance breaks down and conflict emerges when one group gains greater access to power or resources, or outside forces intervene.

The lack of good governance and the anarchy of today must partly be understood in terms of the segmentary nature of clans and their shifting alliances. The strength of Siad Barre lay in his ability to manipulate the delicately balanced clan system, supported by the means of state control. After him, the various warlords and powerless politicians followed this path and none of them tried nor aimed to restore the balance of 'Xeer Somali'.

Next to the domestic affairs (Barre, warlords) , the international context was and is of important influence of causing imbalance: the civil war in Somalia uprooted at a time when the Horn in general (so including Ethiopia, Eritrea, e.a.) was undergoing major social, political and economic transformations (in those days directly related to the ending of the Cold War and the winding down of US and USSR interests in the region). Since last decade, global politics as the 'war on terrorism' are featuring the international context.

### **Xeer anno 2007**

The fundamental question anno 2007, in regard of peace-making and the reconstruction of Somali civil society, is to which extent the traditional values, as expressed in the Xeer, have been lost during 21 years of military rule and four years of civil war. Have Barre's policies in the late 70s, the wars and the anarchy thereafter, the actual politics of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the rise of Islamic Courts (UIC) and lately the intervention of Ethiopian troops eliminate the traditional value of the system of Xeer Somali? In short: is this model an anachronism or is it usable for conflict resolution anno 2007?!

Peace-making needs to be supported with an understanding of the causes of the conflict, whereby the causes of the Somali conflict are open to many different interpretations. An understanding, however, that the Somali conflict is created by people and can be eliminated by human action must be the starting point for any discussion of peacemaking. In this, it is a strong belief among many Somalis that future peace and stability cannot grow until people rebuild their relations of trust and cooperation from the grassroots upwards as was the tradition of Xeer Somali in former days.

*Cited from saga's on Somali's history : Somalia's Land of Punt and the Queen of Egypt*

*The earliest and most detailed historical record of Somalia was that of the famous Egyptian Queen Hatsephshut's voyage to the Land of Punt [which is not today's Puntland only].*

*The Land of Punt extended then from the Red Sea till Lake Victoria in 1500 BC.*

*On arrival there , however, the King and the Queen of Punt enquired her why she came after her ancestors neglected them for a long time .*

*Apparently the contact between the two nations did not begin with the Queens visit but existed much earlier.*



*Ancient Egyptian records narrate how would be pharaohs were ritually required to go pilgrimage to the Land of Gods [land of punt] prior to their ascent to the throne. Ancient Egyptian paintings of their gods show that at least six of them held the common Somali nomads 'hangool', a handy staff that was hook shaped at one end and V shaped at the other, traditionally used for handling thorny bushes. Ancient Egyptian traditional dresses as e.g. the Royal scarf to this day remained part of a Somali nomad girls ceremonial attire.*

## **Paragraph VI . 2 Developments until 1993**

Up until 1993, Somalia was at war with itself but predominantly under authoritarian military rule of President Barre. When in 1993 UN forces came in, first of all to (UNITAF) safeguard distribution of food and other humanitarian help, and soon (UNOSOM) as peace keepers, people hoped the world would save them from further misery.

However, the Black Hawk drama of 1993 in which Pakistani and American UN soldiers were killed, next to a large number of Somalis, the opposite happened and the world seemed to turn its back to Somalia, which got lost in the cruel hands of warlords.

Created from the union of Italian Somalia and the British Somaliland Protectorate, the Somali Republic attained independence in July 1960. For its first nine years Somalia enjoyed a succession of democratically elected governments. In October 1969, amid accusations of corruption and electoral malpractice, the military seized power. Under the leadership of Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, 'Scientific Socialism' was adopted as the guiding ideology for the country's development.

### **2.1 The Barre regime**

Under the banner of Scientific Socialism and combining this with authoritarian rule, Barre embarked on a radical program to fundamentally restructure Somali society. This programme initially received support from a class of urban intelligentsia and technocrats, grappling with the move from a pastoral society to a modern nation state, and disillusioned with the debilitating effects of 'clanism'. With a centrally planned programme, national development was promoted through an end to 'tribalism' and a commitment to 'popular participation', under the guidance of the single Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The masses were mobilized for crash development programmes, such as the literacy campaign in 1973/1974; effigies of 'tribalism' were ceremonially burnt; marriages were celebrated at public community centers and stripped of clan significance; clan elders were renamed 'peace-seekers' (nabad-doons) and made part of the state bureaucracy. This assault on the fabric of Somali society was coupled with state control of the economy. The intention was to turn this 'nation of nomads' into a modern state, in which people were required to look to the state for security and welfare, instead of the clan. President Siad Barre was to be seen as 'father of the nation', embodying the nation himself: scientific socialism was turned to mere ego exposure of the President.

In 1974, Somalia suffered one of the worst droughts (dabadheer) in its history. In September of that year the regime of USA supported Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia was overthrown. In 1977, taking advantage of the weakened Ethiopian state, Barre launched a war to reclaim the Ogaden for Somalia. The war, which met with almost universal support among the Somali people, was a high point of Somali nationalism and Barre's popularity. Defeat a year later by the Soviet-supported Ethiopian army of the new Ethiopian Marxist government caused fissures in Somalia, previously hidden by the war, to open.

The end of the Ogaden war destroyed any sense of national unity.

In 1978 military officers of the Majeerteen (Darod) clan made an abortive attempt to overthrow the regime. Some officers who escaped arrest went on to form the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), which launched a guerrilla campaign against the Barre regime in the central regions of Somalia. In 1981, disaffected Issaq of the northern regions formed the Somali National Movement (SNM) and took up arms against the regime. The fact that both the SSDF and the SNM sought sanctuary in Ethiopia was an indication of the disintegration within the Somali state.

From that period power became more entrenched in the immediate family and clan of the President. Despite the elaborate structures of state that Barre introduced, and despite his anti-tribal rhetoric, Somalis regarded the regime as essentially clanbased, supported by those clans of his extended family commonly known as the 'MOD alliance': Marehan (father), Ogaden (mother), and Dolbahunte (son-in-law). By the late 1980s, even the MOD alliance began to break down, as the Marehan consolidated their positions in the face of growing insecurity.

*Many Somalis point to the Ogaden war, and the defeat of the Somali army in 1977, as the real starting point for the present Somali conflict. The 1988 Peace Accord between Somalia and Ethiopia brought an end to ten years of hostility between these countries. However, the accord also signalled a further demise in pan-Somali unity and solidarity, because Somalia, by signing this Peace Accord, finally recognized Ethiopian control over the Haud (the traditional grazing land of the Somali Issaq). The accord precipitated an assault by the SNM on the northern cities of Burao and Hargeisa in May 1988, which provided the overt starting point of the various wars to erupt since then.*

## 2.2 The Militarisation of Somalia

As Cold War politics in the region demanded, the Barre regime was initially supported by the Soviet Union and later, when the Soviets switched support to Ethiopia, by the USA. Siad Barre was particularly adept at using the tensions of the Cold War and super-power interests to solicit a vast array of armaments for his government.

Between 1969 and 1977, with the support of the Soviets, Barre was able to build Africa's largest army. The Soviets were partners for Barre, the USA was partner for neighbouring Ethiopia.

After 1977, when a Marxist government led by Haile Maryam Mengistu took over in Ethiopia, the Soviets switched partnership from Somalia to Ethiopia and USA did the same vice versa. Thus, from that day onwards Barre turned for support to the USA, and was able to secure \$100 million a year in development and military aid, in return for US access to military facilities at Berbera port for its Rapid Deployment Force.

The USA and the Soviet Union were not the only suppliers of military equipment to Somalia. At different times Italy, Romania, East Germany, Iraq, Iran, Libya, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and China have all contributed. And also Ethiopia brought in its military equipment, arming befriended warlords in neighboring Somalia. The vast arsenals of weapons that the warlords have had at their disposal to fight the civil war have been the Cold War's main legacy to Somalia<sup>9</sup>.

### Continued warfare

Since the late 1970s Somalia, and those areas of the Horn inhabited by the Somali people, have been in a virtually continual state of conflict. As the Somali war has become more protracted, that sense of unity has dissipated further and Somalia became intrinsically fractured and vulnerable for divide and rule politics by domestic rulers and international actors (i.a. its neighbors), and it became a playground for clanbased secessionist movements.

## 2.3 War with the Majeerteen

The Majeerteen clan inhabit the north-eastern corner of Somalia: Mudug, Nugaal, and Bari regions. Since the nineteenth century, they have also formed a prominent business community in Kismayo, where they are known as **Harti** (the generic term for the Majeerteen, Dolbahunte, and Warsengeli).

Since the arrival of the European powers, the Majeerteen have always played a significant role in Somalia's politics. After independence in 1960, Somalia's first two Prime Ministers were Majeerteen, as was the second president, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, who was assassinated in 1969.

In April 1978, following the defeat of Somalia in the Ogaden, Majeerteen colonels attempted to remove Barre in a coup. The coup failed, but those officers who escaped went on to form the SSDF, led by

<sup>9</sup> See Sam Dealey : "Terror's Playground", TIME – November 27, 2006  
Read: <http://intelligence-summit.blogspot.com/2006/11/terrors-playground.html>

**Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf.** The SSDF launched military campaigns against the Barre-regime in the early 1980s in Mudug region, home of Abdillahi Yusuf's sub-clan. The response of the regime to the SSDF guerrilla campaigns was savage. In the months of May and June 1979, over 2,000 Majeerteen were said to have died in Mudug region at the hands of Barre's crack troops, the Red Berets. The brutality of the campaign against the Majeerteen was a forerunner for an even more vicious campaign against the Issaq people.

The SSDF collapsed in 1986, when its leader **Abdillahi Yusuf** was arrested by the Ethiopians, who gave him exile in previous years when he fled Barre's regime, but who at the time were seeking rapprochement with Barre.

In 1989, as the civil war spread into the central regions, the north-east became cut off from the south. In 1990, several prominent Majeerteen joined the '**Manifesto Group**' of politicians, businessmen, and elders who sought the peaceful removal of Barre from power. Since 1991 **Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf** resumed military command of the SSDF after he was released from Ethiopian jail with the fall of Mengistu.

The SSDF played little part in the military over-throw of Barre. Since the overthrow of Barre, the north-east has remained largely free from fighting, except for a short-lived conflict with the **Al Itihad Islamia** (Islamic militants) in June 1992. In contrast, the southern Harti have been involved in a fierce war: under the banner of the SPM/SNF, they fought against the Hawiya and Issaq based USC/SNA (see following paragraphs), for control of Kismayo.

## 2. 4 War with the Issaq

The Issaq, all located in the north-west of Somalia, made up the major section of the population of the former British Somaliland Protectorate which gained independence from Britain on 26 June 1960. Six days later it joined with Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic.

Although the Issaq lost their majority position in the newly formed Somali Republic, they continued to have influence in the government. Between 1967 and 1969 Somalia had an Issaq Prime Minister, Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal.

Part of the traditional grazing land of the Issaq lies in the Haud in Ethiopia. The decision to unite with the south was partly based on a belief that through unity there was a chance of reestablishing control over the Haud. The Issaq were therefore supportive of the war against Ethiopia to reclaim the Ogaden ('Somali Galbeed/Western Somalia').

However, the loss of that war resulted in a mass influx of Ogadeni (Darod) refugees into the north. The threat which this posed to their own lands in the north, coupled with the dictatorial policies of Barre, led the alienated Issaqs to form the Somali National Movement (SNM), in 1981.

The SNM did not achieve widespread support until 1988. In May 1988, fearful of losing their bases in Ethiopia because of the Peace Accord that Ethiopia and Somalia had signed to end the Ogaden war, the SNM attacked the Barre government garrisons and briefly captured the northern cities of Burao and Hargeisa.

In response to the SNM offensive, the Somali Armed Forces then proceeded to carry out a systematic assault on the Issaq population, forcing thousands of civilians, mainly women and children, to flee to Ethiopia. Some 50,000 people were estimated to have been killed between May 1988 and March 1989, and up to 600,000 fled to Ethiopia. These brutal attacks succeeded in uniting the Issaq behind the SNM.

The three years of warfare in the north were largely confined to the Issaq territories in the western regions of Waqoyi Galbeed, Togdheer and Sanaag. Areas inhabited by the Gadabursi (Awdal), Dolbahunte (Sool) and Warsengeli (Badhan) remained largely free from fighting.

When Barre fled from Mogadishu, in January 1991, the SNM took over the territory of the former British Somaliland and assumed authority. In May 1991, having reached an accommodation with the non-Issaq clans in the north, the SNM declared the secession of the north-west region and reasserted their sovereignty as the independent **Republic of Somaliland**, which however is by no country recognized it as such: anno 2007 it is still merely seen as a breakaway from Somalia as the Motherland.

In the self declared republic of Somaliland the euphoria of independence was shattered by an outbreak of fighting in Berbera and Burao in early 1992 and lasted for some eight months. A political settlement was brokered by the Somali elders.

In May 1993, the Somaliland elders went on to conclude a national reconciliation conference (at Boroma) and the elections, through peaceful means, of a new government of Somaliland.

*Anno 2007, this historical fact is felt to be an inspiring example and prove of how 'Xeer Somali' can function in conflict transformation by Somalis themselves, on their own territory and without foreign intervention.*

## 2.5 War with the Ogaden

The Ogaden, a sub-lineage of the Darod, inhabit Somalia south of the Juba river, northeast Kenya and the eastern region of Ethiopia, known as either Region 5 or 'the Ogaden'. In former time, Ethiopia deliberately chose to name the region by the name, Ogaden, of only one of the various Somali clans living in this part of Ethiopia. Therefore, the formal name Region 5 is politically less sensitive.

The majority of the Ogadenis live in the Ethiopian Region 5. It is especially the force of Somali irredentism (that is: the struggle for right to self determination of the Somalis living across), which has given them a particular role in Somalia's politics, as it appealed to the idea of pan-Somalism. However, after the Ogaden war of the 70s and the defeat of Barre's policy to achieve accession of the Somali region of Ethiopia to Somalia, many Somalis took refuge in Somalia. The Ogadenis amongst them by and large provided Barre with a new, supportive constituency, which he later armed to fight the SNM.

However, in April 1989 Barre dismissed the powerful Ogadeni Minister of Defence, Aden 'Gabiyo', thus sparking a mutiny among Ogadeni soldiers in the southern port of Kismayo. This led to the formation of a second armed opposition movement, the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), led by the brother-in-law of Gabiyo, General Bashir 'Beliliqo'.

The sacking of Gabiyo arose out of Marehan fears of Ogadeni dominance in the army. However, the mutiny in Kismayo had its roots in a protracted conflict between the Marehan and Ogadeni pastoralists over the resources of the Juba region.

The creation of the Ogadeni opposition movement signalled the break-up of the Darod alliance of clans that had dominated the ruling group in Somalia for twenty years. A second Ogadeni front was formed in June 1989, when Colonel Omar Jess defected with soldiers from the Somali army in Hargeisa. Since the overthrow of Barre, the SPM have divided into two factions, one led by Aden Gabiyo, and the second by Omar Jess.

## 2.6 War with the Hawiye

The final downfall of Barre was precipitated by the emergence, in 1989, of a Hawiyebased military force, the United Somali Congress (USC), in the central rangelands.

As the largest clan in southern Somalia, stretching into Kenya and Ethiopia, their size, geographical spread, and economic strength within Mogadishu have made the Hawiye significant players in the country's politics. The first president of Somalia was Hawiye, and throughout the civilian 1960s they retained 20 percent of cabinet posts.

After 1969, during Barre's regime, their political power was limited but they kept economically strong and benefited from the concentration of development programmes in the south.

They were therefore not marginalised in the same way as the Issaq. In October 1989 a section of Hawiye soldiers mutinied in Galkaiyo. Afterwards some 200 Hawiye civilians were reported killed. From that point fighting spread throughout the central regions of Mudug, Galgaduud, Hiraaan and the towns of Dusamereb and Beletweyne. The USC (Hawiye) was supported in its campaign by the SNM (Issaq), forming a kind of 'inter-clan alliance'. The Somali army replied by bombing villages and massacring civilians on a scale that matched those against the Issaq and Majeerteen.

*The USC, founded in December 1989, was formed from the Habr Gedir sub-clan of the Hawiye, a number of whom were members of the SNM Central Committee. The first leader of the USC, Mohamed Wardhigly, who sought a **peaceful solution** to the conflict, died in June 1990 and was replaced by General **Mohamed Farah Aideed** (Habr Gedir Saud), who favoured a **military solution**.*

## 2.7 The Digil and Rahanweyne

The Digil and Rahanweyne, located between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, belong to the Sab branch of the Somali people. Although they share the language and religion of other Somalis, they are predominantly agriculturalists and, as such, are looked down on by the Somali pastoral clans.

Their inferior status and smaller numbers have prevented them from playing a major part in Somali national politics. In 1989, a Rahanweyne opposition movement was formed, the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), calling for the removal of Siad Barre. Their small size meant that they played only a limited role in the overthrow of Barre. After Barre fled, they were unable to withstand the rampaging bands of both Barre's and the USC fighters, and became the principal victims of the war and famine.

## 2.8 The Manifesto Group

For a year after the outbreak of war, the capital, Mogadishu, distanced from the fighting in the north and south, remained relatively calm. However, disaffection with the economic situation, the rising tide of displaced people in the capital, and the government's handling of the conflict burst into violent opposition to the regime in July 1989. The events of July 1989 signalled a turning point in the conflict: the Bishop of Mogadishu was assassinated, several prominent religious leaders were arrested and some 450 people were killed during a day of riots, followed by mass arrests and executions of civilians. The ruthless way in which the government suppressed the riots shattered any loyalty to the regime.

In May 1990, over 100 prominent Somali citizens, including the first civilian president of Somalia (Aden Abdulle Osman), a former police commander (General Mohamed Abshir), cabinet ministers, ambassadors, civil servants, religious leaders, elders and businessmen (including Ali Mahadi Mohamed), signed an open letter ('Manifesto No 1') condemning the policies of the regime, and calling on the government to accept a process of discussion with opposition groups to bring about a lasting solution to the political turmoil.

Forty-five of the signatories were arrested and put on trial for treason, but later released after a mass demonstration in Mogadishu.

The Manifesto Group as a coalition of various sections of civil society was, despite their weak political influence, an interesting and valuable initiative, showing the preparedness of individuals who genuinely care about the future of Somalia, to cooperate irrespective of personal or political alliances or individual agenda's. The question to be studied is if such an initiative could be thinkable and successful anno 2007?

## 2.9 The Fall of Siad Barre

In December 1990 Italy and Egypt belatedly offered to sponsor a Peace Conference in Cairo. This was rejected by the SNM, SPM, and the USC, as the USC forces, under the command of General Mohamed Farah Aideed, had reached the outskirts of Mogadishu and planned to move into the city.

Thus, fighting erupted in Mogadishu; the battle for Mogadishu lasted almost two months, during which time attempts by the Italians, Egyptians and the Manifesto Group to broker a peaceful solution failed.

The UN and remaining foreign nationals were evacuated and Barre fled from the city on 26 January, together with his son-in-law General Said Hersi Morgan. They went to his home area in Gedo in south-west Somalia: there he reconstituted his army under the banner of the Somali National Front (SNF), twice attempting to recapture Mogadishu.

After months of friction a second and more intensive battle between General Aideed and Ali Mahadi in Mogadishu began in November 1991. The fighting, which lasted four months, cost the lives of as many as 26,000 civilians. A ceasefire brokered by the United Nations, on 3 March 1992, coincided with a second attempt by Siad Barre to recapture Mogadishu. His forces, which came within 70 km of the capital, were repulsed by the USC, and the former President was forced to flee into permanent exile (to Kenya at first), in April 1992.

The warfare led to the massive displacement of people into Kenya, Ethiopia, and Yemen, and mass starvation.

## 2.10 War and Famine: international intervention in the early 90s

The fall of the Barre regime left a huge vacuum. Any control that the USC and SPM leaders exerted over the situation was quickly lost in the battle against Barre in Mogadishu. The hurried appointment of Ali Mahadi Mohamed as interim President and Omar Arteh Ghalib as Prime Minister by the **Manifesto Group** after Barre fled immediately precipitated a split among the loose alliance of opposition movements that had fought to overthrow Barre. Early attempts by the Italian government to reconcile the various factions showed some signs of promise at two conferences held in Djibouti in May and June 1991. However, without the agreement of General Aideed, Omar Jess, and the SNM, the recommendations of that conference proved impossible to implement.

Throughout this period a handful of aid agencies, e.g. ICRC and MSF, witnessing the vicious violence and impending starvation, called on the UN and international community for a large-scale infusion of food to subdue the fighting.

*In April 1992, after long hesitations and deliberations, the UN appointed a Special Envoy to Somalia, **Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun**, and provided \$23 million in aid and the deployment of 560 military personnel as peace-keepers. The operation, known as **UNOSOM**, was enlarged to 3,500 peacekeepers in August, after the UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali accused the West of being more concerned with the 'rich man's war' in former Yugoslavia than with Somalia.*

By this time inter-clan warfare had declined and was replaced by the armed looting of food aid, thus exacerbating the deadly famine that, at its height, was killing 1,000 people every day in the south. The cost of armed protection for relief supplies was equivalent to the cost of the food delivered which made the UN Security Council endorse in Operation Restore Hope: a US-led United Nations International Task Force (**UNITAF**) that was to 'create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief', throughout the country.

The intervention of the UNITAF was followed by two hastily arranged reconciliation conferences between the military factions: in 8 January 1993 in Addis Ababa, leaders of the politico-military movements, the 'warlords', agreed a cease-fire and signed an agreement on modalities for disarmament.

This was followed on 27 March 1993 by an agreement for **National Reconciliation** in Somalia. By this agreement the factions agreed to the formation of national transitional political and administrative institutions that would lead to the formation of a new government within two years.

Knowing, in the meantime, the continuing civil warfare in following years, the term 'national reconciliation' bleaked and lost part of its promising and encouraging potential: it got less and less easy to get warring partners together to reconcile.

In May 1993, UNITAF handed over to a UN international military and civilian operation known as **UNOSOM II**. A month later, 24 Pakistani UN peace-keepers were killed in Mogadishu during a weapons search of the Aideed-controlled Radio Mogadishu. The deaths of UN peace-keepers ushered in a new cycle of violent conflict in Somalia in which, by mid-September 1993, over 56 UN soldiers and several hundred Somalis had been killed. It was estimated that over 400,000 people had died in the last years of war, and 1.5 million had fled from the country, seeking refuge abroad.

The success of Aideed's men to shoot down prestigious Black Hawk helicopters, the death and humiliation of its dead or wounded UN men, came to be a military trauma for the USA and its allies<sup>10</sup>. The humiliating and dramatic defeat of the UN battalion was thereafter often used in strategic debates on employment of battalions in other conflict regions on the globe. Especially of Western, and in specific American, UN personnel.

It took 14 years for the first high ranking USA diplomat (USA Assistant Secretary of State Mrs. Jedayi Frazer) to visit Somalia, in January 2007.

---

<sup>10</sup> Film Black Hawk Down

## Chapter VI . 3 Developments from 1993

For a detailed description of developments we refer to the recent report of the ICG of January 2007<sup>11</sup>, which we recommend to anyone interested.

A parliament of 275 was established and elected Mr. Sharif Hassan as parliament speaker and Abdulahi Yusuf as president for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), who in turn named Ali Gedi as Prime minister. Subsequent fighting among rival faction leaders, especially after the collapse of the military regime of Siad Barre in 1991, resulted in the killing, displacement, and starvation of thousands of persons and led the U.N. to intervene militarily in 1992. Following the U.N. intervention, periodic attempts at national reconciliation have been made, but they did not succeed.

However, in September 1999, Djibouti took an initiative to facilitate reconciliation which led to a conference in May 2000 held in Arta, Djibouti, and attended by representatives from the Somali clans and a wide spectrum of Somali society.

### TNG

This conference culminated in the adoption of a charter for a 3-year Transitional National Government (TNG) and selected a 245-member TNG Assembly. The assembly then elected a president who in turn named a prime minister. Note however that the northwest (Somaliland) and northeast (Puntland) did not recognise this administration.

While the chaos and instability was continuing regardless of the TNG and the previous four attempts of reconciliation, initiative of the IGAD (12) to propose the warring factions to go for national reconciliation was endorsed by the international community and all faction leaders and traditional elders were called to seriously contribute for that effort.

It was long discussed which kind of state to opt for in the political reconstruction of the Somali state: upon proposal of Ethiopia a federative approach was chosen, endorsed by the IGAD and Western donor community.

As is elaborately analyzed in the ICG Report of January 2007 (13), this federative basis for political reconstruction was one of the fundamental causes of ongoing instability in Somalia's governmental structure and mandate, and the risk to fall apart in brake away regions in stead of forming a stable unified nation.

It took two years and half in Nairobi and finally, in 2004, a Transitional National Charter was developed and signed by faction leaders. In this charter a new formula for power sharing was agreed, the so-called 4.5 Formula, referring to the four biggest tribes in Somalia as Hawiye, Darood, Dir, Rahanweyn (which composes Digil and Mirifle) and 'others'. (In Chapter 7 this Formula will be further discussed).

### Hasan Aweys

The rise of the Islamic Courts in [Somalia](#) began in the mid [1990s](#) with the alliance of a group of Muslim legal scholars and business people led by [Hassan Aweys](#) (former leader of the militant Islamist group [al-Itihaad al-Islamiya \(AIAI\)](#)).

The United Islamic Courts (UIC) are a fruit of the unification in the years to follow, of Islamic groups throughout Somalia. The UIC has been somewhat bellicose towards Somaliland, due to their alleged ill treatment of a respected Jihadist religious leader in Somaliland, and Somaliland has been quite hostile to the UIC whom they term "false prophets".

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 3

<sup>12</sup> IGAD stands for Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional body for the Horn of Africa comprising Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia. They find their raison d'être in being a body for international donors to negotiate with.

<sup>13</sup> Somalia: The Tough Part I Ahead. International Crisisgroup Africa Briefing No.45, 26 Jan.2007

**ARPCT**

United States opposition to the formation of an Islamic Somalia led to the CIA making secret payments to aid Somali warlords in early 2006 organized under the name [Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism](#) (ARPCT). Disclosure of these payments to warlords helped galvanize the ICU's opposition and created public support for the Islamists amongst Somalis. This led directly to fueling a dramatic battle over Mogadishu, fought between May and June 2006. The result was the driving of the ARPCT forces from Mogadishu, and the militant rise of the UIC which is all to be discussed in the next Chapter 7.



## CHAPTER VII Union of Islamic Courts, TFG and Ethiopian troops

### Paragraph VII.1 Union of Islamic Courts

#### **Positive side of UIC**

According to some people we deeply discussed with during our Mission, the level of support enjoyed by the Islamic Courts Union was very high in their early days although the group had constituencies from multiple sub-clans and had broad support among Somali women. During the Mogadishu fighting, women supporters of UIC played important roles.

Since the Islamic Courts largely functioned as providers of social services, the Courts did not maintain a large fighting force: the people provided crucial support by feeding their forces and working with Islamic Courts officials in bringing peace and stability.

In interaction with persons who were very close to the Islamic Courts officials it was said that, prior to the intervention by Ethiopian troops, it was especially the support amongst the people that was of importance for their influence and successes to reform society and oppose warlords and governmental forces

The warlords maintained a robust force in different parts of Mogadishu, with heavy weapons and “technicals” (machine-guns mounted on pickup trucks). The Islamic Courts Union group had a number of technicals less than those of the warlords when the fighting erupted with Qanyare and other warlords, according to a senior Courts official the UIC success in Mogadishu effectively led to the collapse of the ARPCT (Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Combat with Terrorists), which was formed under instruction of the USA out of warlords to stop the rise of the UIC in the summer of July 2006.

The success of the UIC in Mogadishu forced warlords to flee: as such the UIC seriously weakened the position of warlords as important and powerful ‘stakeholders’ in the ongoing violence, corruption and lawlessness in Somalian society. Which is what raised hope amongst the people, especially amongst the women who, amidst anarchy corruption, were due to take care of the survival of family (and nation as such, some even said).

Since its installment in early 2006, the UIC administration put all their efforts in restoring security and stability in the areas they were controlling which the people enjoyed very much in their days.

The UIC, as we were told by Mogadishu residents, did, in the short time they were in power, more than restore law and order. Properties like houses and plantation farms taken during the civil war were returned to the rightful owners. Most important, they argue, they gave hope to the people of Somalia that after over a decade of violence they can live in peace.

The UIC-administration successfully changed the war torn society and had undertaken a rehabilitation program in some public streets and cleaning the city’s main roads that was blocked by heaps of garbage’s for more than a decade. They also successfully implemented disarmament programs which will never be forgotten by Somali people in those areas they controlled.

Violations on Environment such as charcoal business which were eradicating the biodiversity and the devastation of forests were increasing but the ICU administration prohibited this harmful activity.

Kidnapping and hijacking of all kinds of ships by the sea-pirates were stopped and the perpetrators were captured and was a good indication for retuning rule of law.

To give some more examples: since the victory against the ARPCT, the Islamic Courts have enacted a series of decrees and laws that have led to hope for the future of Somali expatriates, local minorities, businessmen and women.

- On July 15 2006, the Islamic Courts opened the historical Mogadishu airport which had been shut down by warlords for 11 years. Mogadishu international airport had been closed since the withdrawal of the international forces in 1995 when rival faction leaders disagreed to offer the public service. In the final years, it was occupied by local bandits. The first airplane chartered by the Arab League flew from the airport for the first time in 11 years picking up Islamic Courts delegates to Sudanese capital Khartoum.

- On August 15 2006, the UIC liberated Haradhere, some 500km northeast of Mogadishu, which had become a safe haven for pirates. Sheikh Ahmed said UIC forces went to Haradhere to deal with pirates who had made the Somali coast a no-go area. "The activities of these people [pirates] had made life very difficult for ordinary Somalis," he said. "Ships were refusing to deliver food to Somalia for fear of being hijacked. We were asked to do something about it and we did." The liberation of Haradhere has dealt a blow to pirates and given a boost to business and security in Somalia. This ended a long period of fear for International maritime communications as shipping firms and international organizations had been forced to pay large ransoms for the release of vessels and crews.
- On August 23 2006, the Islamic courts issued a directive banning the sale of charcoal, rare birds and rare animals. The Executive Committee of the Islamic Courts issued the directive after a full committee meeting agreed to the ban, Sheikh Abdulkadir Ali Omar, the UIC Vice-Chairman, said. "The decision was reached after the committee was briefed on the dangers posed by the indiscriminate cutting of our trees," he said. Almost all the charcoal goes to the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, where a bag fetches about US \$15. Local bandits and thugs were cutting down trees and burning them into charcoal. It was causing major destruction of the ecosystem, soil erosion and water scarcity.
- On August 25 2006, the Islamic Courts opened historical<sup>14</sup> Mogadishu seaport. Shut down by warlords for the past 10 years, Mogadishu's port used to be one of the busiest in East Africa, before the conflict led to its closure. On that day, hundreds of people went to the port to see the ship, which arrived from Kenya carrying goods such as TVs and coffee.
- On September 21 2006, the Islamic Courts issued a decree forbidding the sale of Khat (a narcotic drug) in the daylight during the holy month of Ramadan. Mostly consumed in Somalia and imported from mainly Kenya, it is widely seen as destructive for families, loss of income, waste of productivity and the primary cause of banditry and drug addiction. On October 2, from Kismayo, the Islamic Courts burnt in public seven bags of Khat imported from Kenya which caused anger among Khat traders who instigated riots to express their dissatisfaction. Important to note is that mainly women were the ones who traded on streets and markets, and thus it was mainly the women who went on the streets to protest against the limitations on Khat trade.
- On October 5, 2006 the Islamic Courts declared the formation of the supreme Islamic Sharia court of Banadir province. The announcement ceremony attended by all Islamic officials, intellectuals and civil society members took place in former villa Somalia presidential palace in central Mogadishu. The central Islamic Court intended to replace all tribal Islamic Courts in the capital.

### Negative side of the UIC

The Islamic Courts was accused of shutting down cinemas and prohibiting women from working. Some of these measures were taken by the Courts, although for different reasons and not because of the Courts' alleged jihadist and extremist ideology. For example, movies were banned in the morning in response to requests from parents as the ICU justifies, because Somali children were going to movies in the morning instead of school. The ban on television did not take place, except for restrictions on watching soccer games late at night, according to Somali residents in Mogadishu. This measure was told that it was taken because of disturbances and fighting late at night.

In the previous paragraph it was already mentioned that Khat, a narcotic leaf which more than sixty percent of people chew many and which is mainly merchandised by women, was prohibited : large stocks they had was burned, millions of Dollars were lost without compensation.

The top leadership of the Islamic Courts Council was indefinite. The leadership was often referred to as jihadist, extremist, and at times terrorist. The UIC, while well received by the people in the areas the Courts controlled, received bad press coverage, especially in the West.

In late June 2006, the Islamic Courts Union established a consultative body to function as the legislative (Shura)Courts. **Hassan Dahir Aweys** was elected to head the Legislative Council: he was

---

<sup>14</sup> The port opened in circa 900 AD and described by Ibn Batuta's fourth trip (1328) as the busiest and richest port of the east African coast.

one of the top leaders of the now-defunct Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI) and was designated by the Bush Administration as a terrorist.

**Sharif Sheik Ahmed**, the leader of the Courts, was appointed chairman of the Council's Executive Committee to lead the day-to-day affairs of the Courts.

Some people we discussed with, believed it to be true that Aweys was the leader of the Islamic Union Courts indeed. They are of opinion that this observation of Aweys to be the UIC leader, gave the Courts a bad image amongst the people of Somalia itself, least to say outside of Somalia.

The leadership of the Islamic Courts Union has remained largely under the control of religious scholars and academics and dominated by Albarakaat Company and Benadir Company. The focus of observers inside Somalia and internationally, was on the three individuals **Hassan Dahir Aweys**, **Hassan Al-Turki**, and **Adan Hashi Ayro**: the Islamic Courts were portrayed as a group controlled and influenced by these three individuals.

**Al-Turki**, a man born in the ethnically Somali ('Ogaden') region of Ethiopia, was listed by the Bush administration as a terrorist because of his membership in Al-Ittihad. However, according to Courts officials, Al-Turki did not even hold a leadership position within the organization, which makes Somalis believe that both Aweys and Al-Turki were placed on the list because of their membership in Al-Ittihad and their support for the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in Ethiopia.

**Adan Hashi Ayro's** role within the Courts appears highly exaggerated since he did not have a leadership position in the organization. Ayro is often referred to as the leader of the **Shibaab**, the Youth, although it is not sure if indeed he is in charge and if so to what extent. But, which is very worrying indeed, is the fact that Ayro is suspected of killing four aid workers in Somaliland as well as Abdulqadir Yahye Ali, who was the head of the Center for Research and Dialogue (CRD) in Mogadishu<sup>15</sup>. Civil society activists in Mogadishu suspected the CRD, which is funded by the USA, to withhold reports and keep them for themselves and not sharing them with other groups who worked for the better of Somalia and took risks that the CRD probably had documented and knew about. Despite often close (former) friendships between the activists and CRD workers, the CRD thus isolated itself from the people and was at risk itself.

The Negotiations took place in Khartoum, Sudan, in last June 2006 (led by Mohamed Ali Ibrahim) between the TFG and UIC. The Islamic Courts leaders stated that they would work with the Baidoa-based Transitional Federal Government, although disagreement on key issues remained, which gave rise to the speculation that the Islamic Courts practically rejected negotiations and showed that they didn't want to merge with the TFG but intended to establish their own Islamic government.

### **Burning of the Somali flag**

When the UIC captured Kismayo, the port city in Juba, they burned the Somali flag and this was what seriously lowered their image. When they banned the operations of the Civil Society Organizations, accusing them to be spies and allies to their Western enemies, especially the Americans, they lost a big credit because the civil society activists were, on the contrary, trying many times to cooperate with them and make corrections on what ever mismanagement done by them.

They also refused to employ any policeman or soldier or any kind of the civil servant that had previously worked for the government saying that they are not suitable to work with Islamic administration. All such actions caused restlessness amongst the people and their trust and hope that the UIC could bring a lasting peace and stability faded.

As is explained in Chapter VI, an alienation was felt by the Somalis who are well aware of their Somali heritage but became confronted with an Islamization of their culture and society infrastructure.

---

<sup>15</sup> Abdulqadir Yahye Ali was shot, last week of May 2007, on a distance of only 50 meters from where we had stayed overnight shortly before, during our Fact Finding Mission ...

*Citing a civilian: "UIC did a good job in those months of last year, we had some rest of all fighting and looting, impunity came to an end, unity amongst people was felt to rebuild our nation. But see what we have now, what they call UIC now what is that? The ones who did so well turned in the ones that misuse the name of Islam like warlords misuse the gun and tribalism for gaining power. They focus on war now and disrupt economy. The genuine Muslims don't like using the Islam as politics."*

Somalis are Muslims since long and, as is a common psychological phenomenon, many are the more likely to turn to religion the more they feel they cannot find solutions to their problems. Or if they distrust others, as e.g. their government, or worse: if they experience the government, in casu the TFG as even worsening their troubles. The mechanism 'We cannot trust the government so we trust in Allah!' is a mechanism that is said to be true also amongst orthodox Christians (in e.g. Ethiopia) or fundamentalist Hindus (in e.a. India) and people of other faith. Somalis mention a second and specific mechanism: 'We are divided by clan-rivalry and tribal powersharing, corruption and psychological misery, so what unites us is our heritage of a shared religion Islam.'

### **Ethiopia to confront UIC**

Ethiopia's intervention ('invasion' as many civilians call it) in Somalia of late December 2006, which was given logistical and intelligence support by the United States, succeeded to eliminate the UIC as TFG's organized political opposition. The UIC had sought to unify Somalia through establishing an Islamic state based on Shari'a law.

The defeat of the UIC opened a new chapter in Somalia's political history that is framed by the central drama of whether or not the TFG will be able to become the country's first functioning government after 16 years of de facto statelessness or if, again, we have to conclude it never will and Somalia needs a new parliament, to be elected by national elections that are said to take place in the year 2009.

## **Paragraph VII.2 Transitional Federal Government**

### **TFG**

In the first three months of 2007, events in Somalia became devolutionary cycle and drift back to a state of political fragmentation in which power would disperse to regional and local clans, and the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) would prove unable to restore security and gain legitimacy as a unifying central authority.

The defeat of the UIC threw Somalia back to the political situation that existed prior to the rise of the Courts movement in June 2006, in which a would-be central government that was weak and unpopular confronted assorted regional and local powers rooted in the country's clan structure, now with the addition of an Islamist-nationalist insurgency. The TFG was able, under the protection of Ethiopian forces, to transfer itself partially to Mogadishu, but it was dependent for its foothold on the presence of its protectors and has thus far been unable to govern.

### **Formed in Nairobi in 2004**

Formed under the pressure of Western donor powers and the United Nations in Kenya in 2004, the TFG was, from its outset, lacking a broad legitimacy and starved for resources, and remained in Kenya until 2006, when its contending factions agreed to move to the town of Baidoa in south-central Somalia. Opposition of local warlords and later of the UIC to the TFG in Somalia's official capital Mogadishu, prevented the TFG from installing itself there.

The TFG is structured on the 4.5 Formula for powersharing between clans. Somalis differ in opinion in regard of the 4.5 formula, if this is a healthy basis for working on reconciliation and on creating democratic structures as a government, a constitution, e.a.: some, in particular the politicians, say it is

a good instrument to use because it is simple and clear, which is very important when it comes to something so sensitive and important as power sharing.

Others, in particular the intellectuals, however state that applying the formula will keep Somalia divided on tribal basis and will not encourage nor permit the people to put shared national interest (as economy, health, education, etc.) above tribal interests.

*Citing Muhamed J.: "Look at the National Reconciliation Conference for example, and the way participants are selected. I would say we better invite 4 or 5 political parties or political organisations formed along ideological lines and not the infamous 4.5 tribal formula, while keeping in mind that tribalism and the restoration and running of national government are very incompatible".*

The challenges posed to the TFG by the United States, European powers operating through the European Union, and the United Nations are centered on demands that the TFG brings security to Somalia and that it undertake an "inclusive" reconciliation process that incorporates the major social forces in the country into a governmental structure.

According to the reasoning of the external actors, security and reconciliation are inextricably bound together : instability will continue as long as reconciliation does not proceed, and reconciliation cannot proceed unless there is military security. TFG was urged to pursue both objectives simultaneously. The proved however totally incapable of ruling the nation, lacking constructive policy plans and imposing inconsiderate plans.

An example of their inconsiderate policy is their program of disarmament by force, launched in January 2007. The TFG wanted to collect weapons almost every civilian keeps, if possible on voluntary basis or otherwise at gunpoint. Whereas in principle it is a good idea and a necessity to build a parliamentary democracy, to disarm society, it can be foreseen that people will refuse to cooperate in a political vacuum or anarchy. The launching of the forced disarmament campaign worried human rights activist before hand and on the day it was implemented, they saw happening what they predicted.

To cite on of them: *"The streets of Mogadishu were filled by thousands of people demonstrating against the decision of the TFG of the disarmament , after the ultimatum of the three days. Four died and many more got injured, as human right defenders declared. Most of the people of Mogadishu are angry, disorders and check points are back.. Hate and anger is the feeling of residents in Mogadishu, all the main important places like the main airport of the city and the ports are in the hand of Ethiopians troops. MPs themselves are displaced: in UAE, Kenya, Europe, a few are in Baidoa. In the capital there is the Prime Minister and two ministers, the question is where are all our 275 MPs and 31 ministers? Can the government make a decision? Is the Ethiopians troop can take any action with out the house of parliament?*

*The speaker is in Nairobi and it his entrance in Somalia is refused. Why? The President doesn't know what he wants to do. The leaders of UIC are in Yemen and we don't want them neither. The question is in a country like this, who is the commander?" Mogadishu, 7 January 2007.*

Ethiopian troops were assigned to support the TFG and stabilize the country until forces of the African union (AU) for peace keeping arrives. The dependence of the TFG on Somalia's traditional regional rival Ethiopia has weakened its legitimacy further and has provided added impetus to opposition to it. Addis Ababa is aware that the presence of its forces triggers a backlash and has announced many times already to withdraw one-third of its troops from Somalia but instead only more and more of hem poured into Somalia.

Having achieved its objective of eliminating the immediate threat of an Islamic state on its eastern border, Ethiopia agreed became content to leave Somalia. As it loses protection, the TFG is placed at the mercy of Western donor powers and the United Nations, which are eager to see Somalia stabilized.

Fully cognizant that the TFG cannot presently secure Somalia, the external actors support an African Union (AU) "stabilization mission" to replace the Ethiopian troops. Aware that the stabilization mission (AMISOM) will face a backlash from Somalis unless there is progress toward reconciliation, the external actors put pressure on the TFG to hold a national conference that would be directed toward seeking a power-sharing agreement.

The TFG is however reluctant to pursue power sharing, which would erode the power of its present officials and deprive some of them of their positions and prerequisites.

We have in our possession<sup>16</sup> is a very recent list of appointments of diplomats and civil or military servants by the TFG, proving the corruption and clan-centered politics of the government. For obvious reasons we cannot attach it as an attachment to this FFM Report but can, on request, give a close look on the names, functions and family relation of the persons in charge.

Especially the

Hawiya, who form the major dominant clan in Mogadishu, are worried with the power sharing and how President Yusuf nominates senior governmental positions to his own clan. Besides that, Yusuf used as the National forces mostly forces from Puntland, his homeland.

In March 2007 it became clear that the test of strength for the TFG would be centered in Mogadishu. With the TFG having announced that it would hold a reconciliation conference there in mid-April, its prime minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi, admitted at a press conference in Nairobi on March 14<sup>th</sup> (which is already postponed to June 14<sup>th</sup>) that the security issue in the next two weeks would be a test for the TFG. At that press conference, which Gedi called to appeal publicly for donor aid to provide a secure environment for the reconciliation conference, he also said that donor countries had yet to provide funds for training TFG security forces.

### **War instead of Reconciliation**

Heavy fighting enrolled in Mogadishu that caused the killing of more than 350 civilians thousands to become wounded, and tens of thousands to flee their homes. Helicopters were seen bombarding the City of Mogadishu and heavy artilleries indiscriminately shelled the people. Dead and wounded civilians were lying untended in the streets<sup>17</sup> after heavy artillery and mortars pounded residential areas.

The fighting in Mogadishu also caused loss of properties. Human rights groups, condemned the Ethiopians and the TFG. European diplomats said already that investigation is to be undertaken on the abuses resulted from the fighting between clan militias in the town siding the remnants of UIC and Ethiopian troops backing Somali government forces who have committed war crimes during the heavy fighting in Somalia's capital.

A remarkable fact to mention on this place is that a large number of the MPs have a Western nationality next to their Somali identity. The Minister of Industry, the Minister of Agriculture and the Speaker of the Parliament have a Dutch passport, as well as the Head of Police.

It was suggested in a Dutch newspaper<sup>18</sup>, that it might be a good idea to – in case these people visit their second countries as e.g. The Netherlands – arrest them at upon entrance and take them in custody to question them on their eventual responsibility for war crimes.

The journalist noted in the last lines of his article that his proposal was merely meant as a provocative remark, not as a serious idea to be appealed for. In Somalia however, the idea wasn't seen as a bad one and was, on the contrary, seen as something these Western countries could work on indeed.

It is anyway an issue to give serious further attention.

<sup>16</sup> The Annex 'Facts of misuse of power sharing' is available on request to the authors of this report.

<sup>17</sup> We have recorded a DVD film with horrible images on this scene, available in IKV PaxChristi

<sup>18</sup> Kees Broere 'EU en VS medeplichtig aan oorlogsmisdaden', De Volkskrant 30-4-2007

*Mr. Eric van der Linden, the chief of the European Commission's delegation to Kenya, said he had appointed a team to look into several war crime allegations stemming from the civilian casualties. "These are hefty accusations," Mr. van der Linden said. "We are examining them very prudently."<sup>19</sup> (The Guardian, 7 April 2007/Hiiraan Online)*

**Press release SOHRIDEN, 17 May 2007**

**HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN SOMALI WELCOMES INVESTIGATIONS ON WAR CRIMES IN THE RECENT FIGHTING IN THE CAPITAL**

Somali Human Rights groups have welcomed that Somali government agreed an investigation by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights LOUISE Arbour on allegations that that recent fighting in the capital violated international laws. , An official from one of the Somali Human Right groups based in Mogadishu who has requested to be unidentified said that it is a good step forward probing what he described war crimes committed upon innocent Somali civilians. , The offer done by the Somali government comes after John Holmes; the UN undersecretary for humanitarian affairs visited the Somali capital, Mogadishu, on Saturday and met with the President Abdullah Yousuf.

Mr. Holmes later after the meeting said that the fighting in Mogadishu had violated international humanitarian law. "When you have a pitched battle going on in a city full of civilians, that is not in accordance with the Geneva conventions "he said

Also he said that Somali government will allow an investigation by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour

The latest fighting , between March 12 and April 26, killed nearly 1,679 people and sent more than 500,000 people flee the capital as government forces backed by Ethiopians were encountering Islamists



<sup>19</sup> Read The Guardian 7-4-2007 'EU given war crime warning over Somalia aid'  
See <http://www.globalpolicy.org/intljustice/general/2007/0407eucrimes.htm>  
and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,,2052060,00.html>

### Paragraph VII.3 Ethiopian intervention

Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia of late December 2006, which, as said in former paragraphs, was given logistical and intelligence support by the United States, succeeded to eliminate the UIC as TFG's organized political opposition.

According to the intellectuals and those who had nationalist view, the presence of Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu seems to them as if, metaphorically speaking a Nuclear bomb exploded in Mogadishu.

*“To many Somalis , there is no difference between the TFG led by Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi and President Abdullahi Yusuf on the one hand and the Ethiopian regime led by Meles Zenawi on the other. They consider the first duo as self-serving charlatans and the latter as their master and puppeteer.*

*The successful BLITZGRIEG of the Ethiopian expedition force from Baidoa crushed the forces of the Islamic courts and within few days triumphantly entered Mogadishu placing the president mr yusuf who is seen by almost all Somalis as an old ally of Ethiopia, which for long time were tiring to install a weak and divided Somalia,if they can not have but Ethiopian controlled government” we were told in meeting intellectuals.*

Ethiopia's victory has dismantled only the most visible part of the Courts. The militant Shabaab leadership is presumed to have remained largely intact. The grassroots network of mosques, schools and private enterprises remain in place and continues to expand because of the contributions from Islamic charities and neighboring countries like Eritrea that is accused, by supporting Islamists in or from Somalia, of fighting thus its proxy war with Ethiopia.

*Citing A. Faarax, former politician from Somali region of Ethiopia ('Somali Galbeed'): “As it appears, we have lost the ability to be united and stand tall and dignified among the 21<sup>st</sup> century nations who are nowadays competing for the millennium development goals.*

*We have made ourselves fools and the laughing stock of the world. Imagine, we have come to a point where even Ethiopia come to our rescue?! And by selling to the US administration the idea that Somalia is a haven for Al-Qaeda, Meles Zenawi has received military as well as economic support from Washington, not necessarily to wipe out the Union of Islamic Courts and quell Al-Qaeda threats, but to use the American power to occupy Somalia and implement his clan-based balkanization strategy. The Ogaden, i.e. Western Somalia’s internal dissent that has been following the last elections in Ethiopia, and the growing Muslim population up to around 60%, constitute part of the rationale for Ethiopia’s reluctance to allow the resurrection of a Somali state, that is capable of invoking a strong united Somalia nation.*

*But, in any case we cannot but face it: it is our fault that Ethiopian tanks are rolling on the streets of Mogadishu...”*

#### Heavy fighting in Mogadishu

March 2007: heavy fighting between Ethiopians troops and a large number of armed Somalis opposing the government and the presence of Ethiopians troops is continuing in the capital Mogadishu.

*After several days of shelling, Somali government officials publicly ordered residents to vacate entire neighborhoods alongside the frontline of the 21st October Road of Mogadishu, in order to flush out the armed attackers. The prime Minister and Vice Deputy secretary of Defence for the TFG Both from Abgal Clan told the media: “We call on the civilians living in terrorist-held areas in Mogadishu to abandon their houses because it is possible that government troops may target these areas any time.”*

Few days before the politicians and elders representing the Somalis' Hawiye clan-family met with Ethiopian officers and agreed a cease fire . Later the Hawiye Elders released a 9-point statement



following meetings with Ethiopian military officers. They declared that their Hawiye Clan, who is the predominant community in Mogadishu, does not support terrorism and that they are not al-Qaeda. In their statement they issued a call for the removal of Ethiopian troops from Mogadishu, and called on President Abdullahi Yusuf to send his troops back to Puntland (find the press release below).

The fighting came after Hawiye denouncing what they called the discriminating policy of the TFG against the Somali clans. The Hawiye accused President Yusuf of favoring the Darood, specially the Majerteen economically and politically. They felt confirmed in their allegations the fact, for example, that very recently the President increased the taxes at Mogadishu Port. This urged Hawiye Merchants to stop importing and exporting goods due to the high taxes levied on them, whereas the taxes in Bossaso sea port remained much lower. Important to understand in regard of this example is the fact that the revenues collected from Bossaso is for Puntland State (Yusuf's homeland) only, whereas the Mogadishu Port revenue is National income.

We came to conclude upon meeting the various sections of political and civil society that, as for the current situation in Mogadishu, many residents resent to some extent the Courts' defeat, distrust or even feel threatened by the TFG and are dismayed by the ongoing presence of Ethiopian troops especially now that the Ugandese AU battalion is stationed in Somalia.



**Hawiye Elders in Meeting**

## **Annexes**

### ***Hawiye Elders in Meeting: Press Release - Mogadishu 20, March 2007***

*After we Made sure the killings and violations of human rights committed by the Somali transitional federal government (TFG) in Bai province which is the current base for the TFG,*

- Understood the violations like robbery, killing, outside power under one tribe, the formation of illegal detentions and the rape of women during its two-month stay in the heart of Somalia, Mogadishu,*
- Made sure that the TFG troops that are not legitimate and that oppose the plans of the UN Security Council resolution to secure the peace in Mogadishu,*
- Understood that the TFG troops, the Ethiopian and Ugandan forces were used to invade Mogadishu that houses more than 2 ½ million of Somali population. Such invasions will undoubtedly spark genocide, destruction and dislocations,*
- Considered the seriousness of the president's threats of war, stealing properties and the closure of independent Radios in the country,*

- Understood that the president was unwilling to establish a reconciliation conference among the government, society leaders, traditional elders, civil society members, religious leaders, intellectuals, the defeated Islamists and the factional leaders who handed their arms over to the government,
- Understood that fake Somali currency from the semiautonomous regional government of Puntland to undermine the economy of the Somali people, the economy of Hawiye clan in particular.

**We would ask the international community:**

- To interfere the humanitarian situation in Somalia, the capital Mogadishu in particular, and to halt the attacks carried out by the government and its Ethiopian allied forces who are massacring innocent Somali people in Mogadishu, attacks that caused destructions of buildings, lose of human lives and insecurity that rose high.
- To close down the violations of the government, Ethiopian and Ugandan forces against the people in southern Somalia.

Finally, we are telling the international community and the Somali people who are peace loving community that we will stop and defend against the decoys and infringement planned by the Somali government which does not act in accordance with transitional constitutions and the international laws. After we realized that the world was ignoring the outcry call from the formal Hawiye meeting on 06/03/2007, we are making clear that humanitarian catastrophe will take place in Mogadishu if the international community does not get involved in the tense issues instantaneously and help resolve the exacerbating situation in southern Somalia. Then a fighting bursted out and more than hundred and above were killed by the helicopter and artilleries indiscriminately shelling the civilians place where the insurgents and Militias from clans are confronting the Ethiopian troops and the TFG force . The traditional leaders are claiming that Mr. Yusuf is in an operation of revenge and return a credit or victory for Darood clan who once have defeated by Hawiye in early 90s.

The traditional elders of Somali's powerful Hawiye tribe, who had several hours long meeting in the Somalia capital Mogadishu after the ceasefire broken, on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2007 issued a joint declaration statement over the current situation in the country as Mogadishu remains clam for the second day.

After the meeting, Abdi Imam Omar, the chairman of Hawiye tribe read out the statement to the reporters as below:

**The third Hawiye declaration.**

We (the clans of Hawiye) here be indicating that we have implemented the ceasefire agreement in which we signed with the Ethiopian military officials on 22, March 2007. We suggest the international community to support the truce and help keep it emplaced and also not turn blind eye to the humanitarian disaster in the capital.

The Hawiye elders called on the Somali population living in the capital to remain in their homes and not comply with the warning by the puppets within the government in which they said to abandon some villages in the city.

The Ethiopian government should immediately pull its troops out of our country as it had already pledged to quit Somalia after the arrival of the African Union peacekeepers. The Puntland militia should be brought back to their settlements in northeast Somalia until to find national government.

As elders of Hawiye we decided to release the misled militiamen that caught in the Mogadishu clashes three days ago and hand them to their clans. Hawiye is ready to attend the all-inclusive national reconciliation conference after the implementation of the ceasefire.

We again appeal the Hawiye people within the interim government to come before the elders to be taken in account for the responsibility they are holding for the Hawiye. Finally, we call on the Somali people wherever they are to vividly attend defending the religion and the country against the enemy.

## CHAPTER VIII - Regional and international involvement

### Eritrea

As is Ethiopia, Eritrea is also distrusted for its political agenda. Somalia and Ethiopia are fighting a war by proxies and were nationally confronted with civil war and dictatorship. Somalia is as yet to form a strong state, with Ethiopia acting to keep it like that and Eritrea trying to go into proxy war via Somalia with Ethiopia.

This is the context in which facts are explained in Somalia, as for example the fact that, in former days, Eritrea gave training militarily in their country and inside Somalia to Islamist militias and sending weapons to UIC. And the recent fact that the Eritrean government has welcomed all top leaders of UIC who came to Asmara when seeking refuge, next to 42 Members of Parliament, inclusive the former speaker of the parliament Sharif Hasan Sheikh Aden. In Eritrea itself, President Isaias Afewerki doesn't allow any space for, so to say, indigenous Islamists whereas even Islamist leaders as Afewerki can live and work freely on its soil.

Therefore, Eritrea's approach is understood by Somalis as an example of the proverb: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend".

### From Russia to China

In the Cold War era, Russia (USSR) played a crucial role in the political drama in the Horn of Africa, as is described in detail in former chapters. Most crucial for Somalia was its role in regard of the defeat of the Barre regime in the battle for 'Somali Galbeed' with Ethiopia in 1977.

In 1974, Somalia suffered one of the worst droughts (dabadheer) in its history. In September of that year the regime of USA supported Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia was overthrown. In 1977, taking advantage of the weakened Ethiopian state, Barre launched a war to reclaim the Ogaden ('Somali Galbeed') for Somalia. The war, which met with almost universal support among the Somali people, was a high point of Somali nationalism and Barre's popularity.

The USSR, being the ally of President Siad Barre and his ideology of Scientific Socialism against his Ethiopian neighbour Emperor Haile Selassie with his American allies, overnight switched partnership when Maryam Mengistu took over. Defeat a year later by the Soviet-supported Ethiopian army of the new Ethiopian Marxist government caused fissures in Somalia, previously hidden by the war, to open: the end of the Ogaden war destroyed any sense of national unity.

Anno 2007, Russia (successor of the former USSR) isn't that directly involved in the Horn anymore: Russia is a disintegrated state in itself and has first of all to cope with enormous domestic problems.

On the verge there is China as the superpower of the 21<sup>st</sup> century era: a nation that 'entered' the African continent for ambitious economic programs and declaring that respect for humanrights will not be on the top of its agenda in negotiating with African partners.<sup>20</sup>

### USA

"Unfortunately Somalia has become a haven for terrorists and the Al Shabaab militia took part in the last fight that happened in Mogadishu' USA Assistant Secretary of State Mrs. Jedayi Frazer said, upon returning to Kenya after a quick visit on April 7<sup>th</sup> to Baidoa to meet President Yusuf and PM Gedi. She was the highest ranking official to visit Somalia since 1994.

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2007, the US military launched a strike against UIC adherents claiming they were aiming to hit suspected members of al-Qaeda. Abdirahman Dinari, a Somalia government spokesman, confirmed the offensive: "We know that a US gunship raided targets of al-Qaeda in southern Somalia sometime yesterday afternoon. Absolutely a lot of people were killed. So many dead people were lying in the area, but we do not know who is who, but the raid was a success," Dinari said. The targets included the senior al-Qaada leader in East Africa and an al-Qaada operative wanted for his involvement in the 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing over 250 people.

<sup>20</sup> Read for example Lindsey Hilsum 'We love China' <http://www.granta.com/extracts/2616>. Hilsum is the International Editor of Channel 4 News and has reported extensively from Africa and the Middle East.

Air Force AC-130 gunships were used for the attack: these are heavily armed aircraft which are operated by the special operations command and have been used heavily against the Taliban in Afghanistan. US navy vessels have been deployed off the coast of Somalia to make sure al-Qaeda or allied activists do not escape the country, the US state department has said.

### Al Qaeda or the oil factor?

Some intellectuals say, and it was discussed in various media, that the USA are not worried first of all about Islamism but that it is all a matter of petroleum (oil) at the first place. Somalia has large unexploited reservoir of oil. China, as the rising economical actor globally, is especially interested in Africa and exploits already oilfields in the Somali region of Ethiopia<sup>21</sup>. Somali intellectuals reason that the USA fears China will also try to get into Somalia for this reason.

And likewise can the fear for coming to power of Islamists (read Al Qaeda, according to USA) be mainly a matter of the control and exploitation of Somalia's oil. This fear is not without reason: countries like Saudi Arabia have clearly shown their ambition to get control over the oil resources and, as long as this didn't materialize, prevent Somalia to exploit the resources themselves. The Saudi's don't like 'Somali oil' to be in the world market, Saudi's reason that Somali are not Arabian but first of all Africans and therefore must not be given space for African ownership and control over the oil resources but have to be kept under control of Arabian power and interests.

Thus: as is the USA, it is also Saudi Arabia to be suspected to implement their political agenda in Somalia related to oil, and that is why the Arab countries add to the instability of Somalia by sending or training Islamist insurgents.

The oil-factor is discussed in last decade and very recently, during World Social Forum in Nairobi in January 2007, the topic was discussed in workshops and by keynote speakers, leading to publications globally. Read e.g. the interview with Nunu Kidane, activist of the PAN (Priority Africa Network).<sup>22</sup>

*Citing Mark Fineman: "Far beneath the surface of the tragic drama of Somalia, four major U.S. oil companies are quietly sitting on a prospective fortune in exclusive concessions to explore and exploit tens of millions of acres of the Somali countryside.*

*That land, in the opinion of geologists and industry sources, could yield significant amounts of oil and natural gas if the U.S.-led military mission can restore peace to the impoverished East African nation.*

*According to documents obtained by The Times, nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to the American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips in the final years before Somalia's pro-U.S. President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown and the nation plunged into chaos in January, 1991. Industry sources said the companies holding the rights to the most promising concessions are hoping that the Bush Administration's decision to send U.S. troops to safeguard aid shipments to Somalia will also help protect their multimillion-dollar investments there.*

*Officially, the Administration and the State Department insist that the U.S. military mission in Somalia is strictly humanitarian. Oil industry spokesmen dismissed as "absurd" and "nonsense" allegations by aid experts, veteran East Africa analysts and several prominent Somalis that President Bush, a former Texas oilman, was moved to act in Somalia, at least in part, by the U.S. corporate oil stake.*

*But corporate and scientific documents disclosed that the American companies are well positioned to pursue Somalia's most promising potential oil reserves the moment the nation is pacified. And the State Department and U.S. military officials acknowledge that one of those oil companies has done more than simply sit back and hope for peace". Mark Fineman: 'The Oil factor in Somalia', Los Angeles Times 18 Jan. 1993 / Somalia Watch 19 May 2007<sup>23</sup>.*

<sup>21</sup> NRC 25 april 2007: 'Aanval op oliebedrijf in Ethiopie'

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.uitpers.be/artikel\\_view.php?id=1693](http://www.uitpers.be/artikel_view.php?id=1693)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.somaliawatch.org/archivejuly/000922601.htm>

## Arab League

In December 2006, an [Arab League](#) spokesman said his organization would like all hostilities to stop and warring parties to respect the binding agreements they signed before world community. He said Somalia doesn't need outside intervention and Ethiopia must leave Somalia. Samir Hosni, Director of African Affairs for the [Arab League](#) called for a halt to the violence. The Arab League seeks to co-sponsor peace talks with the African Union.

## EU Efforts

In [December 2006](#) just as major hostilities were breaking out, Mr. [Louis Michel](#), European Commissioner in charge of relations with Africa, the Pacific and Caribbean countries conducted [shuttle diplomacy](#) between the TFG seat in Baidoa and the UIC government seat in Mogadishu. The warring parties agreed to talk, but the conflict continued to rage on, worrying observers whether the prospects of talks were delivering indeed. The Finish EU Presidency issued a plea to end the fighting in Somalia, the EU Commissioner Louis Michel likewise called for the TFG and ICU to resume talks in Khartoum. In January [2007](#), EU leaders met and agreed it was unlikely for them to send any peacekeepers to Somalia, and were also unclear about what financial assistance they might give a peacekeeping mission, but affirmed their interest to continue humanitarian support to the nation.

To illustrate the European approach, read how Mr. Louis Michel himself describes it in his article published in The Independent, dd. January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

## ***Somalia should have an international peace force***

*By Louis Michel*

*No one will lament the demise of the Islamic Courts. But the problem remains as before.*

*When I went to Baidoa and Mogadishu on 22 December in a last-ditch attempt to prevent conflict in Somalia, I told the leadership of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) that only a political solution could bring about serious chances of lasting peace and stability in their country.*

*The fighting that has since occurred between the TFG, with the support of Ethiopia, and the Islamic Courts has changed the political landscape in Somalia. No one will lament the demise of the Courts in which radical Islamists had gained the upper hand. But the problem remains unaddressed in the same terms as before: only a process of dialogue and national reconciliation can save Somalia from the curse of recurrent chaos and violence.*

*Somalia is not doomed. The Somali people are tired of war and violence. They crave peace and a chance to build decent livelihoods. The Somali leaders should seize this opportunity to lay the foundations of a proper state, with functioning institutions, security, public services for all and an environment in which a vibrant Somali private sector can flourish. A concerted international approach to the crisis is needed more than ever. The European Union, together with other key international actors is committed to help at this critical juncture. Our support will have to be rooted in a Somali-owned process, and we all have the collective responsibility to get it right. I see three main challenges that need to be addressed.*

*First, security. It is crucial that Ethiopian troops - the current guarantor of stability and TFG power - withdraw quickly and an international stabilisation force deploys in Somalia within weeks. The longer Ethiopian troops stay, the greater the risk the TFG will lose support and credibility. Without doubt the Jihadi elements of the courts that are still active will exploit the Ethiopian presence to launch guerrilla warfare and terrorist action. Considering the heavily charged history of international military presence in Somalia, some basic parameters must guide the deployment of an international force. Its mandate should focus on ceasefire monitoring and support for the building of effective Somali security forces with the progressive dismantling of militias. This mission should be limited in time, and composed of African troops including contingents from Muslim countries.*

*The political challenge is even more crucial. An international force should be conditional upon an unequivocal political commitment by the TFG to engage in inter-Somali talks with a view to achieving*

*more representative and all-inclusive institutions. The rise of the Islamic Courts can, to a great extent, be explained by the rejection of power sharing which gave too much weight to warlords.*

The Transitional Federal Charter should constitute the basis and framework of such a process. This should pave the way for the drafting and adoption of a new constitution. Such a constitution would almost certainly have to have some sort of federal architecture. What matters most in any case is that power-sharing arrangements be guided by genuinely inclusive considerations rather than personal motives.

*The third challenge is that of rebuilding the country. There is an urgent need for recovery and development assistance and a concerted plan for reconstruction. The EU, as Somalia's biggest aid donor, can play an active part in this process. It is, however, clear that reconstruction can succeed only if there is a genuine political process of reconciliation and power-sharing in place.*

*Finally, the regional dimension needs to be factored in as the fourth element in the Somali equation. Up until now, Somalia has primarily suffered from external interference and intervention. At the same time, the stability of the Horn of Africa can be ensured only if there is peace and security in Somalia.*

*Good neighbourly conduct is, therefore, of paramount importance. This can be achieved only through by addressing some of the root causes of regional tensions in the Horn - whether they relate to border disputes, illegal migration flows, or competition for scarce resources such as water. The Horn of Africa is one of the most strategic regions in the world, at the crossroads of Africa and the Middle East, bordering the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. It has the potential to become a key trading hub between two continents and a place of vibrant exchanges between cultures and religions.*

*Only a comprehensive regional agenda based on security and development can help stabilise Somalia and the Horn.*

## REFERENCES

In the text there are references and sources mentioned in the footnotes on the specific pages. Below follow some more references that are not yet referred to. All are websites of Dutch national daily newspapers

TROUW De Verdieping - dossiers : Somalië blijft 'een groot zwart gat', ondanks verdrijving van islamitische strijders

[http://www.trouw.nl/deverdieping/dossiers/article588822.ece/Somalie\\_blijft\\_een\\_zwart\\_gat\\_%2C\\_ondanks\\_verdrijving\\_van\\_islamitische\\_strijders](http://www.trouw.nl/deverdieping/dossiers/article588822.ece/Somalie_blijft_een_zwart_gat_%2C_ondanks_verdrijving_van_islamitische_strijders).

NRC Ethiopische leger nu in heel Somalie

[http://www.nrc.nl/buitenland/article587952.ece/Leger\\_Ethiopie\\_nu\\_in\\_heel\\_Somalie](http://www.nrc.nl/buitenland/article587952.ece/Leger_Ethiopie_nu_in_heel_Somalie)

TROUW Oorlog Somalië - Kenia beducht voor invasie van islamisten

[http://www.trouw.nl/hetnieuws/wereld/article590947.ece/oorlog\\_somalie\\_Kenia\\_beducht\\_voor\\_invasie\\_van\\_islamisten](http://www.trouw.nl/hetnieuws/wereld/article590947.ece/oorlog_somalie_Kenia_beducht_voor_invasie_van_islamisten).

NRC Wie in Somalia wil heersen heeft clan nodig

[http://www.nrc.nl/binnenland/article587997.ece/Wie\\_in\\_Somalie\\_wil\\_heersen%2C\\_heeft\\_de\\_clans\\_nodig](http://www.nrc.nl/binnenland/article587997.ece/Wie_in_Somalie_wil_heersen%2C_heeft_de_clans_nodig)

### **The following books are recommended for further reading:**

'Putting the Cart before the Horse: contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation State in Somalia'. Ed.: Abdi M. Kusow, 2004

'Ethnic Federalism, the Ethiopian Experience in comparative perspective'. Ed.: David Turton, 2006

'Somalia: Economy without State' by Peter D.Little, 2003

'The invention of Somalia'. Ed.: Ali Jimale Ahmed, 1995.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want first of all to acknowledge Marjan Lucas: without her this mission would not have happened at all, Marjan was phoning us almost everyday in Mogadishu worried about us. And Edwin Ruigrok we really thank, we appreciate his understanding and warm sympathy. We also say thanks to you Noortje Henrichs, to Johan Te Velde and to Juul Muller. And basically we express our thanks to the IKV Pax Christi as a whole, to make this mission happen.

In Somalia we thank everyone who helped us to do our job there: Jalle Xabeeb, Engineer Xassan, Sicow, Yusufeey iyo Xarbi and of course Jalle Keemico.

Finally thank our young and brave filmmaker, who got arrested by police and military when we were working and was released only after two days being disappeared in police custody. But who nonetheless managed to make the two video tapes that we brought home!

We hope our joint efforts bring us a step forward and encourage those who, like us, do not want to give up in working on peace and justice, and genuine democracy globally and in specific in the Horn of Africa.

\* \*  
\*

*Citing from our diary, Mogadishu 21<sup>st</sup> of Feb.: "Peace and stability in Mogadishu was deteriorating since the collapse of the short-lived power grip of the Islamic courts, but the artillery duel between insurgents and the Ethiopian expedition force reached its critical level the night of 19/20 February 2007. Unverified information talks about 45 deaths and hundreds of wounds.*

*In fact the artillery duel was disseminating terror, death, wounds, property destruction, and massive displacement in Mogadishu since the advent of the ineffectual TFG and the Ethiopian expedition force but what happened last night was absolute novelty in terms of fire magnitude and duration time. Mogadishu is ruin of 17 years long war hardly registered a similar night".*



IKV PaxChristi Fact Finding Mission - Somalia (Feb – April 2007)



<b>Annex I</b>
----------------

## Somalia needs African solidarity

IN JUNE 1974, a few of us spent some days in Mogadishu, Somalia, as members of an ANC delegation. We had come to the capital of Somalia to attend the annual Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government. As was the practice then, the Assembly had elected the President of Somalia, Major General Siad Barre, as its Chairperson and Chair of the OAU until the next Assembly. Siad Barre therefore presided over the proceedings of the Mogadishu Summit.

During that month of June, as it hosted the Assembly, Mogadishu served as the venue for a great African celebration. The reason for the celebration was the then impending collapse of Portuguese colonialism and the liberation of the African Portuguese colonies. Unquestionably, the star of the day, who attended the Assembly, was the late Samora Machel, who was to become the first President of liberated Mozambique.

In its 24 June 1974 edition the US "Time" magazine carried an article entitled "Sinking the Lusitanian". Among other things it said: "When President Antonio de Spínola inaugurated new governors for Angola and Mozambique...for the first time ever in a public speech about the territories, (he) used the word that Africans had been waiting for him to speak: independence. 'Self-determination cannot be dissociated from democracy,' he said, adding: 'Neither can we dissociate self-determination from independence.'

"The declaration suggested that Spínola was willing to let sink his pet idea of a 'Lusitanian Federation' - a close alliance of Portugal with semi-autonomous African territories. As the general's speech went on, however, a chill set in. In an apparent volte-face from his earlier tone, he outlined four gradual stages of decolonisation, only at the end of which would the possibility of independence be broached.

"All this may merely have been Spínola's way of asserting his determination not to see white settler interests sold down the river in the territories. However it was meant, liberation movement leaders at the annual meeting in Mogadishu, Somalia, of the Organisation of African Unity...read neo-colonialism into every word. Declared Frelimo Vice President Marcelino dos Santos: 'Our attacks will be maintained and even increased until independence is conceded under the sole leadership of Frelimo.'"

If others might have had doubts about the certainty of the liberation of the Portuguese colonies, the ANC had none. In a letter of congratulations to the new Secretary General of the OAU elected in Mogadishu, William Eteki Mboumoua, Oliver Tambo said:

"Throughout the world, the forces of reaction are suffering successive defeats. The peoples of Africa and the world struggling for national liberation, social progress and peace are scoring impressive victories.

"Of particular relevance to us and to the great peoples of Africa is, of course, the heroic victory scored by our brother peoples and combatants of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in helping to bring about the downfall of the hated Portuguese colonial and fascist regime of Caetano.

"This decisive victory has not only opened up the prospects for the rapid accession to independence of the Portuguese colonies in Africa, it has also greatly strengthened the liberation forces of our own country..."

As part of a cultural programme put together for the benefit of the delegates, a Somali drama group performed a play that sought to denounce the neo-colonialism mentioned by "Time" magazine, and which severely compromised the independence of African countries. The play had scenes of delegates visiting Western embassies on their way to OAU meetings.

Here they would be given briefcases full of cash. They would then be given instructions on the resolutions they should propose at these OAU meetings and how they should vote. The sketches included instructions on the need for these delegates to do everything possible to frustrate the struggles against colonialism and apartheid.

This was the first and last time I visited Mogadishu. For many years afterwards Mogadishu and Somalia remained in our memories as African places of hope for us, a reliable rear base for the total liberation of Africa, including our liberation from apartheid. Indeed, in later years, others of our comrades returned to Mogadishu, this time to work with the Somali government to prepare for the clandestine infiltration into South Africa of cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe, who would travel to apartheid South Africa by sea, secretly departing from the Somali ports!

The fact of the matter however is that in time Somalia fell apart and ceased to exist as a viable state. This has led to the eventuality that, as the year 2007 began, Somalia put itself firmly at the top of the African Agenda. Whereas in 1974 all our liberation movements and independent Africa counted on Somali support to achieve the goals of the African Revolution, in 2007 Somalia needs the support of the rest of the African Continent, again to achieve the goals of the African Revolution.

It is true that Somalia remains an independent state. However, for 15 years it has been victim to a protracted internal conflict that resulted in the collapse of the state, the death of an estimated one million Somalis, the emigration of thousands as refugees, and the impoverishment of millions as a result of severe and sustained socio-economic regression.

Further to complicate the situation, giving it a global dimension, allegations have now been made that international terrorist groups have established themselves in Somalia, taking advantage of the situation created by the collapse of the Somali state.

Earlier, in the context of the conflict that ensued after the overthrow of Siad Barre, the United Nations (UN) had authorised a US-led military mission to intervene in Somalia, among other things to create the conditions for the distribution of humanitarian assistance. In 1993 Somali combat groups in Mogadishu killed 18 US soldiers, after shooting down a US helicopter. This incident came to be known as "Black Hawk Down", and led to the withdrawal of the US troops and the termination of the UN mission, which failed to achieve its objectives.

Somalia has also turned into a source of regional instability, even as the African Continent through the African Union (AU) has intensified its efforts to ensure that ours becomes a Continent of peace, focused on responding to the challenge of eradicating poverty and underdevelopment.

For the sake both of Somalia and our Continent as a whole, Africa has no choice but to come to the aid of this sister African country. In many respects the deeply entrenched Somali crisis demonstrates what can happen to many of our countries if they are not governed and managed in a manner that addresses the interests of all citizens, bearing in mind the national specifics of each country.

As a state entity Somalia came into being as recently as 1960. In that year the two colonies, British and Italian Somaliland, gained their independence. To end the fragmentation of the Somali population brought about by colonialism, they then decided to merge and form the United Republic of Somalia.

This process of the unification of the Somali-speaking people however also led to tensions with neighbouring countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, each one of which has a Somali-speaking minority. The worst manifestation of these tensions was, of course, the 1977 war with Ethiopia, when Somalia tried to annex the Somali-speaking Ogaden region of Ethiopia. (Feudal Ethiopia had managed to seize part of Ogaden during the 1880s, and later succeeded to get the whole of it through an agreement with colonial Britain.)

We mention these events because today there are Ethiopian troops in Somalia. Not surprisingly, the media reports that many Somalis consider this Ethiopian presence as a humiliation. One businessman, Abdulahi Mohamed Mohamud, was reported as saying, "We are afraid of a long war, and people are angry at the Ethiopian troops."

As the Somali state collapsed after the overthrow of Siad Barre in 1991, it became a conglomeration of different enclaves. North-west Somalia proclaimed itself the independent Republic of Somaliland. The Puntland region declared its autonomy. Various parts especially of southern Somalia fell under the control of different clan leaders, or "warlords".

The question that must arise is whether, in fact, during the years of independence, the different traditional "clan" areas and sections of the Somali population had developed a strong enough sense of national cohesion and identity to ensure the survival of the United Republic of Somalia proclaimed in 1960!

The importance of this question is highlighted by the role played by the issue of clan divisions in the uprising that overthrew Siad Barre in 1991, who evidently had discriminated against some clans, specifically the Mijertyn and Isaq clans, in favour of his own Marehan clan. In this regard, a BBC correspondent, Peter Biles, has reported that: "When Somalia's president was overthrown in 1991, much of the country fell under the control of warlords and clan-based factions."

Another report spoke of "the oppressive, capricious, and clan-based autocracy of the late dictator, Siyad Barre, who used his interpretation of clan institutions for his own ends, to oppress political opponents, create inequality, and promote conflict and violence. So great was his malevolence and abuse of power that virtually all Somalis now hold a deep-seated fear and distrust of any centralized authority."

Another important element of the story of Somalia is that, as had happened in many African countries at the time, General Siad Barre had acceded to power in 1969 by coup d'etat. He seized power after Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke, elected President in 1967, had been assassinated. Inevitably,

the absence of democratic institutions would make it extremely difficult for the different Somali clans, regions and interest groups to negotiate among themselves to define a national compact that would ensure the cohesion of the nation.

Somalia now has an Interim Government that is recognised by the AU and the rest of the world, born in 2004 after protracted negotiations held in Kenya, involving the warring Somali factions. As a result of the Ethiopian intervention, which ousted the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) that had fought itself into a position of power in Mogadishu and other parts of southern Somalia, this Government is now operating from Mogadishu.

As the military conflict continued after the ouster of the UIC, the US decided to launch air strikes against the retreating UIC adherents, claiming that it was striking at terrorists who had bombed the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in 1998 and then taken refuge in Somalia. The majority of the world, including the AU and the UN, has been forthright in opposing this action, correctly asserting that this will not help to resolve the crisis in Somalia and would add oil to the fires that are burning in the Middle East. In addition, some Somalis have been quoted as saying that these air strikes were carried out as an act of vengeance for the death of 18 US soldiers in Mogadishu in 1993 and the shooting down of the US 'Black Hawk' helicopter.

Responding to the events in Somalia, including these US air strikes, the Foreign Minister of neighbouring Yemen, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, said:

"Yemen was hoping that the Islamic Courts and the interim government would have settled their differences through the negotiating table. Unfortunately this did not happen.

"Now we have to deal with the situation as it is, and we will have to work on getting everybody concerned in Somalia to negotiate the future management of Somalia, to restore peace and security, and to put the interests of Somalia above the interests of clans or political parties or ideologies."

In these words, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi set the agenda for Somalia that the AU must address during this year, 2007. Supported by the UN Security Council, the AU is engaged in an urgent process that should result in the deployment of AU peace-keeping troops in Somalia, to help this sister country to extricate itself from its protracted crisis.

In this regard, the January 2007 President of the Security Council, Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, announced that the Council regards Somalia as "a high priority matter" and is concerned about instability, security, and the humanitarian situation. The Council strongly supports an inclusive political dialogue among various political forces in Somalia and favours the speedy deployment of IGASOM, the new force that would be set up by the African Union and a seven-nation East African regional group of nations.

Time will tell when the next Assembly of Heads of State and Government, this time of the AU, will convene in Mogadishu. For that to happen, as Africans we will have to do everything necessary to overcome the old and new historic problems that have placed Somalia on our agenda as an unresolved problem of the African Revolution, as the liberation of the Portuguese colonies was an unresolved problem of the African Revolution in 1974.

Beyond this, perhaps, as Africans, we should seriously consider whether we should not take up the call originally made by former President Khatami of Iran for a "dialogue of civilisations" - a dialogue that would lead to a peaceful resolution of conflicts between clans, within nation states, between states, and between coalitions of states, to ensure that the Somali example of anarchy and death is not visited on our countries and the rest of humanity. Might this not serve as a fitting tribute to the 50th anniversary of the historic independence of Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah, which we will celebrate this year, 2007!



Uit: ANC Today - Volume 7, No. 1 • 12 - 18 January 2007

Link: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2007/at01.htm>

**Annex II****The Somaliland Times, Issue 58, 1 March 2003**LINK <http://www.somalilandtimes.net/2003/58/5803.htm>**Symposium On Civil Society Concluded In Hargeisa**

Hargeisa (SL Times): The largest gathering for representatives of civil society organizations operating in Somaliland and Somalia took place this week in Hargeisa.

Hundreds of people assembled at a conference hall in Ambassador Hotel, last Saturday, to attend a symposium organized by the Dutch international NGO NOVIB on civil society in Somaliland and Somalia.

The majority of participants came from neighboring war-torn Somalia and there was a fair gender representation in the composition of delegates from both Somaliland and Somalia.

The symposium discussed two studies prepared by NOVIB: "Donor Assistance towards Somalia-Development Policy and Coherence" and "Mapping Somali Civil Society."

The study on donor policy and development assistance towards Somalia was meant to provide information to Somali civil society with regard to who is who in the list of donors who give aid to Somalia. This study mainly focused on the EU as the largest donor entity. The views and policies of the EU on Somalia were indicated here with brief explanations given on the stance of certain member states on Somalia. The study attempted to provide information to the international community about the role of civil society in Somalia while identifying the specific character, strengths and potentiality of Somali counterparts.

The study recognized regional administration structures and recommended collaboration with those bodies as development partners.

The second report consisted of a mapping study aimed at formulation of a better understanding of the nature of civil society organizations in Somalia and their link with Somali culture, traditions, history, language, how to establish connections among themselves and with donors.

The study provided assessment of civil society organizations, their structures, capacity to deliver services, goals and mission. The report was seen as a general overview of the context and findings on civil society.

Though the two reports acknowledged that Somaliland's civil society was the most developed in the former Somalia, yet little was said about Somaliland itself. The information on Somaliland was somehow distorted presumably by the authors of the two reports, who all happened to be from the South. Interestingly enough, NOVIB at one time recruited the Somaliland born Professor Abdi Ismail Samater as a consultant for this project. Another Somalilander, Ms. Faiza Jama also works for NOVIB. Both characters are known for their ardent support of the former Somalia and hostility to Somaliland's independence.

It was the first time since independence that Somaliland has hosted an event attended by hundreds of people from Somalia. At times, the symposium looked just like one of those peace conferences on Somalia where everyone was invited with little or no regard for legitimacy of representation. While most Somaliland delegates actually represented well known NGOs and CBOs, it was difficult to know who represented whom with regard to most people who came from Somalia. Unfortunately, the majority of Somaliland's civil society representatives indicated that they were not consulted about the findings outlined in the two studies put for discussion during the symposium.

On Wednesday, many of Somaliland's delegates walked out to protest against the fact that the Somaliland side was denied participation in the formulation of the two reports. Somaliland's civil society organizations were joined by their counterparts from Puntland in refusing to put their signatures to a "Consensus Paper" that the organizers wanted to issue on Wednesday as the final declaration of the symposium.

It was noted however that despite such obstacles, the symposium has given a boost to civil society activism and created opportunities for exchange of experiences and information. NOVIB's Dorothe Appel has also shown tremendous strength and skills in making the symposium possible. Without her efforts, the symposium wouldn't have materialized.

## Lessons Learned from the Civil Society Symposium

Last month (February 2003), Hargeisa consecutively played host to two regional conferences where Somalilanders rubbed shoulders with delegates representing international organizations and civil society groups in neighboring Somalia. On the first occasion, an Amnesty International workshop for human rights defenders from Somaliland and Somalia was held. Facilitators and lecturers at this meeting included AI's Martin Hill and the UN Independent Expert on Human Rights in Somaliland and Somalia, Dr. Ghanim Al-Najjar, Mohamed Barud of Samotalis and representatives of 23 human rights organizations working in Somaliland and Somalia.

The organizers of the human rights workshop were people who are familiar with the internal situation in both Somaliland and Somalia. More importantly they were knowledgeable about the recent past of the former Somalia, particularly the tragic period of the eighties during which wide-scale atrocities had been committed against civilians in present day Somaliland. As individuals, these organizers were the type of people who closely followed what has been going on in Somaliland and Somalia since the collapse of Barre's regime. Moreover, participants knew in advance the issues to be discussed at the meeting and most of them had formed some kind of a vision before or during the meeting as to the outcome. As a result, the workshop went on smoothly and was concluded successfully.

The other meeting, a symposium on civil society organizations, was held in the last week of February. This was a much bigger meeting, attended by hundreds of delegates, mostly from Somalia, and to a lesser extent Somaliland. Bringing such a large number of people together was certainly a very ambitious project. However, one of the weak points that later had a negative impact on this meeting was the fact that the organizers, NOVIB, have not been conscious enough about Somaliland's sensitivities, particularly when it comes to the issue of independence and past war crimes.

Operating from Nairobi and served by Somali political entrepreneurs and consultants posing as human rights or civil rights activists, NOVIB presented two studies: Mapping Somali Civil Society and Donor Assistance towards Somalia. But it seemed that the authors had only "Somalia" in their minds for most of the time while writing these two reports. The two studies not only smacked of anti-Somaliland perspectives but also contained such misleading and deceptive statements as "There is recognition that it was not only the people of Somaliland who were wronged under the regime of Siyad Barre but that the majority of all Somalis suffered during this period."

This is of course something often repeated by Somalis who fear that they as individuals, or members of their clans, could be implicated in the genocides that took place in Somaliland during the eighties. It is also akin to saying "It was not only the Jews who had suffered during the holocaust but also most of the Germans as well." Because of the repetition of some insensitive literature, Somaliland organizations boycotted signing the Hargeisa Consensus Declaration during the last session of the symposium on Wednesday.

NOVIB's Somaliland counterparts that were involved in launching the symposium cannot escape blame for not sensitizing the organizing Dutch NGO as well as stakeholders from Somalia with the prevalent attitudes, values and aspirations in Somaliland. The reservations voiced by representatives of most of Somaliland's civil society organizations against the final declaration should be understood within this context.

Despite this setback, a lot of good work was done in the symposium in terms of exchanging experience and networking. To some extent, the people and government of Somaliland should feel proud for hosting two big regional events. But if international organizations want to sponsor gatherings of this type in the future, they should bear in mind that Somaliland need not be confused with Somalia. At least for the people of this country, these two places are not the same and can't be the same.

It is also essential not to engage consultants who are politically biased against Somaliland in the preparation of reports on the state of affairs in Somaliland. And above everything else, Somaliland's local NGOs and government agencies must be involved from the beginning in any studies or reports to be made on Somaliland issues.

Before and during engagement in any local or regional endeavors, it is necessary that Somaliland's public is kept informed about what is going.

Finally, international organizations should avoid thinking on behalf of Somaliland's people and government; the agenda of every collaboration must be laid down and legitimacy of representation established in a transparent manner; and Somaliland's government should show a more pro-active involvement in leading and coordinating such efforts in the future, for Somalia may not have a central government but Somaliland does have one.