

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The situation in Somalia

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## **Introduction:**

In 1991 an armed conflict began in Somalia following the overthrow of the dictator at the time, Siad Barre. Since then the nation has been locked in conflict between terrorist groups and various governmental organizations. Effectively, Somalia has lacked a stable government since 1991. All parties involved in this conflict have committed acts which violate international humanitarian law, some even amounting to war crimes.

As of now, the primary conflict lies between the Somalian government and the al-Shabab terrorist organisation. This organisation came into prominence during the time of 2006-2009 and in 2012 it pledged allegiance to al-Quaeda, another well-known terrorist organisation. Considerable amounts of Somalian land is controlled by al-Shabab as of November of 2021.

As this issue developed into more of a humanitarian crisis, the international community responded by sending in a UN peacekeeping mission to protect relief workers and oversee food distribution. Eventually, this mission also expanded to include restoring law and civil order. After the death of UN troops, all foreign troops were withdrawn from the nation by March of 1995. The UN then looked into allowing African leaders to take the initiative to restore peace and safety in the region.

This troop withdrawal did not last long as this year, in May, President Joe Biden approved a plan to once again, deploy special operation troops to Somalia, reversing the change made by former President Donald Trump who withdrew nearly 700 ground troops who had been stationed there. The aim of this action is to attempt to minimise

the threat from al-Shabab by suppressing its ability to plot or attempt complicated operations.

## Definition of Key Terms:

1. **Coup-d'état:** A sudden decisive exercise of force in politics
2. **Humanitarian relief:** Is provided for humanitarian purposes and includes natural disasters and man-made disasters. The primary objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity.
3. **Federal Government:** Constituting a form of government in which power is distributed between a central authority and a number of constituent territorial units
4. **Transitional Government:** An emergency governmental authority set up to manage a political transition.
5. **Insurgents:** A person fighting against a government or invading force.
6. **African Union:** The African Union is a continental union consisting of 55 member states located on the continent of Africa.
7. **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border

## Background Information

### Siad Barre

Siad Barre was a Somali general who served as the president of the nation from 1969-1991. He came into presidency after the coup-d'état which overthrew the Somali Republic. This was following the assassination of the president of the Somali Republic. Barre reconstructed Somalia as a Marxist-Leninist state, renaming it to the Somali Democratic Republic with support from the Soviet Union. In the 1980s opposition to his political regime grew due to his increasingly dictatorial rule and abuses of national security service including a

genocide. In 1991 the communist government collapsed as the rebellion successfully removed Barre from power. This led to the beginning of the Somali Civil War.

### **United Nations Operation in Somalia I and II**

The United Nations Operations in Somalia I, otherwise known as UNSOM I, was the first part of the United Nations intervention operation in Somalia after the fall of the communist government, run by Siad Barre. It served to provide humanitarian relief and to oversee the UN-brokered ceasefire, which ran from April to December of 1992. Following this, the UNSOM II was set up from March 1993 to March 1995. These two operations were organised essentially for the same purpose, to establish a secure environment for humanitarian operations to be carried out because there was effectively no government at the time and the country was becoming increasingly more susceptible to factional violence.

The UN intervention ended in 1993 in light of the aftermath of the Battle of Mogadishu, which was a vicious conflict fought by US soldiers and Somali militiamen when the UN decided to intervene to establish democracy in the nation. On June 5th, the UN would suffer its worst loss of peacekeepers in decades. This battle also enveloped the death of 18 US soldiers and 73 wounded. These losses caused the withdrawal of all troops from the area, UN and US soldiers included. Overall these missions were seen by many as a failure, with the UN having withdrawn troops before they could complete the original mission of UNSOM I and II.

## **Current Situation**

### **AMISOM**

AMISOM or the African Union Mission in Somalia is a regional peacekeeping mission, operated by the African Union, with approval from the UN. The aim of this peacekeeping mission is to support and stabilize the country. The main parties involved in this mission are the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the USA and UK. Despite being a heavily under-resourced mission, AMISOM peacekeeping was able to push out militants from the capital city in 2011. Over the next few years, AMISOM succeeded in removing al-Shabab troops from many populated cities in the nation. In doing so, the mission was also able to protect two transitional governments, two federal governments and two national electoral processes,

essentially allowing the nation to have a more secure political space for leaders to address key problems and for international actors to return to Somalia.

AMISOM has faced and is facing many issues with its mission in the past few years. While AMISOM can drive out militants it cannot fully defeat the organization, this would require active participation from federal and state leaders in order to ensure that the threat posed by al-Shabab is fully exterminated. Unfortunately, AMISOM is also heavily under-resourced due to a lack of financial resources which limits its ability to aid Somalia to become a more stable nation.

## **COVID**

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of Somalia's economic, social and political problems. Years of conflict and governmental instability had left Somalia heavily under-equipped to deal with COVID. It was reported that there was only one well-equipped quarantine facility in the country, with a population of 15 million. "In places like Syria, Yemen and Somalia, where health care infrastructure has been significantly damaged by ongoing conflict, mounting an effective response against COVID-19 pose an extremely difficult challenge," the United Nations has said.

The UN secretary general had even pleaded for an international cease-fire to allow healthcare workers to deal with the situation safely. For aid agencies, COVID-19 curtailed international travel leading Somalia to be almost completely cut off from aid. COVID also deepened the nation's political divisions, creating further instability. For example, Al-Shabab controlled the southern parts of the nation at the time and did not allow for sufficient amounts of healthcare material to come through.

The pandemic negatively impacted Somalia in many ways. Firstly Somalia's main industries of livestock trade and remittances were severely impacted, lowering the nation's economic gain and creating greater instability in the economy. It also proved a large toll on healthcare in the nation, with the nation already being under-equipped due to the war, the pandemic hit hard and took many lives. As a result of this, people were more at risk of infectious diseases and malnutrition.

## **Attacks on civilians**

There have been many civilian casualties during the span of the many conflicts which have occurred over the past 30 years, most being caused by targeted Al-Shabab attacks in the form of suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices, shelling and even assassinations. Al-Shabab has also killed many civilians they accused of working with the government, mostly with unfair trials and insufficient evidence.

The government has also committed such crimes. Federal and regional military courts have been carrying out executions and sentencing people to death despite outcry from the international community. The UN has also attributed a few killings to AMISOM from late 2020 to early July of 2021. AMISOM set up a board of inquiry in late August of 2020, which led to Ugandan soldiers being ambushed by Al-Shabab forces. Ugandan soldiers responded by killing 7 civilians. The estimate is that around 500,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the war in 1991, although officials are struggling to keep an accurate measurement of deaths due to the rise in deaths due to COVID-19 in 2020-present.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **Somali Republic**

The Somali Republic is the official name for the area encompassing the Federal Republic of Somalia and Somaliland. Somaliland is a self-declared state in the Horn of Africa, it has not been recognised by the African Union as a real nation. The official nation of Somalia consists of all of Somalia including Somaliland and is currently led by Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. This federal government has only been running since 2012 when a new constitution was passed. After this, reconstruction began as external forces, and the military worked to keep insurgents out of the more populated cities in the nation. The nation has been severely weakened by the civil war, although its economy has remained vaguely stable, its healthcare sector and agricultural sector have been damaged. Education within the nation has also been set back. The government

### **United States of America**

President Joe Biden has just approved a plan to redeploy hundreds of ground forces into Somalia once more. The US hopes that this plan will work toward their counterterrorism

missions by suppressing al-Shabab. The US is keen to provide humanitarian aid to the civilians in Somalia but their larger aim is to defeat al-Shabab. With US troops in the nation, the Somali administration and the government will have time to set their security priorities. The US AFRICOM (Africa Command) is one of 11 unified combatant commands. It is responsible for US military operations including fighting regional conflicts and keeping military relations with more than 53 African Nations. AFRICOM has conducted many airstrikes within the Somali state supposedly in response to al-Shabab attacks. It has been accused by international human rights organisations of killing civilians in these airstrikes and still has not taken any accountability for these actions.

### **United Nations Security Council**

The UNSC has been involved in this conflict since it began in 1991. It has undertaken activities to help alleviate poverty, hunger and drought in the nation and has worked with the African Union to create a mission to stabilize the political situation. The UN's contribution to this conflict has been outlined in the UN Strategic Framework 2017-2020, this articulates the UN's commitment to aid Somalia with humanitarian, political and security aspects. The UN has not only been involved through other organizations but has formed peacekeeping missions such as UNSOM I and II to push al-Shabab and other clan-based organizations out of the nation to allow for a stable government once more.

### **al-Shabab**

al-Shabab is a terrorist organisation active in east Africa and mostly Somalia. It describes itself as waging jihad against "enemies of Islam". Most leaders from this organisation are from the Hawiye clan, one of the largest in Somalia. Most of its soldiers are concerned with nationalist and clan-related conflicts. Although the group has been severely reduced in size, it continues to attempt to recruit and increase territorial control. Michael E. Leiter, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center in the USA, said: "Although al-Shabaab's rank-and-file fighters remain focused on removing the current government of Somalia by pursuing al-Qaeda's agenda, we are particularly concerned with training programs run by al-Shabaab that have attracted violent extremists from throughout the globe, including the United States."

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN was heavily involved in this conflict in the early 1990s until the Battle of Mogadishu which is outlined in more detail above. The UN intervention operations consisted of three main operations UNSOM I, UNITAF and UNSOM II. These operations were all terminated after the Battle of Mogadishu, since then, the UN has set up an office in Kenya to monitor the situation from a nearby location. the UN also works toward encouraging African nations to take initiative in this tissue due to the distrust that Somalia has in other non-African organisations or states. The UN has implemented many treaties in an attempt to placate this conflict, most of which were only put into place from 2020 onwards

- Security Council resolution on the extension of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, 2021, 2592
- The Situation in Somalia, 3 December 2021, 2608
- Security Council resolution on authorization to the Member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until 31 March 2022, 21 December 2021, 2614

## Possible Solutions

1. **Improve international information** on this issue such that citizens around the world will be well informed about this issue and able to send personal funding, or urge their governments to do the same, on a much larger scale.
2. **Maintain strong international humanitarian funding** into the country to ensure that there is sufficient funding to deal with civil issues such as droughts, famine and civil assault.
3. **Encourage international cooperation and mediation** on this conflict and issue by organising conferences for more stable and powerful nations to work together to provide insight and aid to Somalia and also to ensure that the whole international community is kept updated on this issue such that the community will be able to provide needed assistance at any given time.
4. **Give the Somali people a voice.** Ensuring that the Somalian people and the government are always given the opportunity to express their opinions or concerns on this issue such that external nations do not fully control the situation within their nation.

Also so that all external nations can have a deeper insight and understanding of the issue and the assistance needed.

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