

Human Security in Somalia's New Order

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Introduction

To many observers of the Somali scene, the events of June 2006 appeared to mark an abrupt change for the better in the country's fortunes. For the first time in years, there seemed to be reason for optimism. The Somali capital, Mogadishu, was enjoying relative peace for the first time in 15 years. The warlords were in flight, their roadblocks were gone, and their gunmen who had terrorized the city's residents for more than a decade, had vanished. But, there were troubling indications that all was not well, and that the apparent peace was only the prelude to the threat of further conflict.

The initially 'moderate' stance of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) soon gave way to a somewhat harsher reality of hard-core fundamentalists with increasingly visible similarities to Afghanistan's Taliban, who along with Al-Qaeda, reportedly trained some of them. Their extremist Salafi concepts of Islam tend to clash with the more tolerant Sufi traditions of Somali Muslims. The ICU militias, having spread across most of central Somalia, launched an attack to the south in late September and captured the port city of Kismayo, near the border of Kenya.

The ICU takeover in Kismayo has reportedly been accompanied by rising tensions, demonstrations against the occupation of the town by the ICU militias, and a rapidly increasing flow of refugees from Kismayo to Kenya. Meanwhile, encouraged by the demonstrations, the local militia of Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) leader, Col. Abdikadir Aden Shire "Barre Hiraale," which had fled before the Islamist offensive, now claim to be preparing to retake Kismayo. The Islamist militias are almost entirely from Hawiye Habr-Gedir subclans, a fact unlikely at the best of times to enhance their popularity with the largely Darod population of Kismayo.

Initially, Mogadishu's Islamic Courts were essentially moderate community groups without violent political agendas. Within the context of the subclan, and to varying degrees, the subclan-based Islamic courts were able to provide a measure of basic human security, what the UN Commission on Human Security describes as, "political, social, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity."¹

¹The UN Commission on Human Security

But extremist groups from their clans, with access to external resources, and quite different agendas, easily infiltrated these local groups, set up militia groups in the name of the courts, and formed the Islamic Courts Union, with its own militia as a mechanism to extend their control.

The Commission's definition also included, "the rights and freedoms that people consider to be of vital importance." But these appear to be becoming early casualties of the extremist takeover, as the fundamentalists are encouraged by their newfound strength, to impose their views on a largely unreceptive population.

The extremists, typically returnees from the Gulf, with access to funding from fundamentalist Islamic charities, employed a basic strategy of starting up social services, such as Koran schools and clinics to build public support. This also provided a base for preaching their own extremist version of Islamic orthodoxy. By virtue of belonging to local sub-clans, they were frequently able to infiltrate and capture the Islamic courts set up by their sub-clans to provide a measure of juridical guidance, where none existed before. As their constituencies grew, this opened the way to putting in place courts with an increasingly fundamentalist agenda the establishment of Islamic courts militias, and the ICU. This enabled the gradual take over of some of the sub-clan militias, and the careful buildup of military strength aimed at the eventual forcible seizure of power.

The ICU appears to have been formed as part of this strategy, to cover the longer term intention of an armed struggle for power. In this context, it was able to quietly prepare itself by recruiting, training and arming a disciplined militia force, based upon its fundamentalist adherents. For several years rumors were floating around in some circles of training camps in various areas of central Somalia, but in the context of the country's generally turbulent situation, these did not attract serious attention.

While known hard-core Jihadists initially controlled only three of Mogadishu's 14 Islamic Courts, this was gradually and quietly changing, over the past few years. For many observers, the real surprise only came after the defeat of the warlord Alliance, when

Sheikh Sharif Ahmed who served as the moderate face of the ICU was sidelined, and the ICU suddenly transformed itself into a new "Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts"(SCIC), headed by Hassan Dahir Aweys, the founder of Al-Itihad Al-Islamiya, which carried out a series of terrorist attacks in Ethiopia in the 1990s.

To many observers, the apparently long-standing involvement of Hassan Dahir Aweys in the ICU helps explain how, in the course of a few weeks, the ICU/SCIC militias were able to decisively defeat the warlords' militias. Subsequent events reveal that the ICU/CIC militias had received significant training, an infusion of discipline, and a supply of heavy weapons, supplied by Eritrea and funded by extremist groups in the Gulf. The warlord militias fought like untrained and undisciplined nomads, while the Islamist militias fought like trained and disciplined soldiers, which together with their heavy weapons, and trained commanders, gave them an important advantage.

The SCIC militias included Afghanistan-trained jihadis, like Adan Hashi Ayro, a key follower of Aweys, and apparently a number of other veterans of the Afghanistan conflict. They also included "Afghan Arabs" who appear in jihadi videos, fighting alongside the ICU/CIC militias during the battle for Mogadishu. Some Somalis suggest that these groups may have been instrumental in a sophisticated car-bomb attempt to assassinate TFG President Abdillahi Yusuf in Baidoa.

More recently, there are new reports of foreign Jihadis from Pakistan and elsewhere, converging on Mogadishu, possibly to reinforce the Islamic Courts militias, who are expanding their efforts to take the rest of Somalia. Thus far, the SCIC militias are continuing to expand towards Somalia's borders with little effective resistance, but the resistance is likely to increase as they advance beyond the Hawiye inhabited areas into other regions like Kismayo.

The rise of the fundamentalists

Following the expulsion of their leaders and militia from Bosaso in 1992, the cadres they left behind, turned back to constituency-building with financing from extremist charities in the Gulf and elsewhere.

They focused on public services, including health and education, where little or nothing was available. This enabled them to set up their own madrassas, often manned by Egyptian extremists, no longer welcome in Egypt, as the foundation for training a new generation of hard-core fundamentalists. They later did the same in Gedo, and in Mogadishu.

In the early 1990s, increasing inter-clan conflict and ethnic cleansing in Mogadishu, forced many non-Hawiye residents to flee to their clan homelands, seeking security of life and property. As the conflict spread, many fundamentalists from central Somalia's Hawiye clan also found it expedient to converge on Mogadishu and make their center of operations. These included Al-Ittihad operatives who when expelled from Bosasso, migrated to Gedo region, under the protection of some of their Marehan clan colleagues from that region. As in Bosasso, they helped to organize a few clinics and Qur'an schools to win over the local population, followed by training camps and guerrilla bases, from which they later launched terrorist attacks into Ethiopia's Ogaden region. They also set up a base at Ras Kamboni, a small dhow port at the southern tip of Somalia, near the Kenya border, through which they imported arms, supplies, and Arab "Afghan" trainers, sent by their supporters in the Gulf.

The Ras Kamboni base may also have provided the entry point for some of the arms and terrorists infiltrated into Kenya's coast region. It was reportedly abandoned, following the Al-Qaeda attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, when Al-Ittihad leaders feared retaliation from the Americans, and deemed Mogadishu a much safer place to hide. More recently however, since the ICU takeover in Mogadishu, one of the Al-Ittihad militia leaders was reported passing through the Juba Valley with a small group of militia, moving towards Mogadishu.

The implications of the fundamentalist takeover in Mogadishu are clear, and should have been expected from the history of these groups. Following the collapse of Al-Ittihad's takeover attempt in Bosasso more than a decade ago, the fundamentalist group, fled west to Laas Qooray on the coast of Somaliland, and when made unwelcome

there, began to infiltrate south through Ethiopia's Somali region to Gedo in southwestern Somalia, where they established new bases. They realized that the time was not ripe for a successful takeover and needed to build a stronger local constituency to have a chance of success. But once established, they tried to forcibly impose their views and behaviour on the local communities, who soon turned against them.

At first glance, the ICU victory appeared to represent a step forward, in terms of human security, as indicated by the restoration of peace in Mogadishu. Initially, some ICU leaders were making peaceful noises, hinting at willingness to talk to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), based in Baidoa, and disclaiming any intention of forming their own government. At the same time however, they continued their rapid advance to the North, aimed at seizing control of much of the rest of the country, and setting up their own regime.

While the extremists, were initially keeping a lower profile, this was quite rational, to avoid alarming potential victims, or prematurely provoking known adversaries. Having taken the strategic town of Beledweyne, over 300 kms to the northwest of Mogadishu, without a fight, this strategy seemed to be working well. But in the wake of inconclusive peace talks in Khartoum, sponsored by Sudan's President Al-Bashir, the announcement of the transformation of the ICU into a new organization led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys left little room for wishful thinking about the "moderate" intentions of the ICU/Council of the Islamic Courts.

Somalia: Clan, Ideology and State

Many Somali intellectuals, caught up in western concepts of the nation state, would like to have one of their own. After all, they share the same language, claim descent from a common ancestor, Somaale. They share the same Islamic religion - though like most African Muslims - including traditional Sufi practices that diverge sharply from the Salafi concepts that the fundamentalists would like to impose on them.

These aspirations however, bring them up against the basic reality of Somali concepts of a social

organization, of a society based on real or imagined blood relationships and descent from a common ancestor, that determine the individual's place in society, and relationships with others. This makes for a situation in which clan and sub-clan membership play a key role; in which young children are taught to memorize their genealogy or *irtisaanyo*, back ten generations or more, to be aware of who their potential friends and enemies may be.

This contributes to a situation in which clan and sub-clan play important roles, down to the extended family level, with the individual depending primarily on clan, sub-clan and family for protection, justice and support. It is a system that beyond the concept of blood relationships, often tends to promote fission rather than unity, and competition and conflict, rather than cooperation.

The clan-based concept of society, with social organization, expressed in terms of clan membership, and state citizenship based on ethnicity, gave rise to the concept of Somalia as the state of the ethnic Somalis, whether within or beyond its borders. This also led to the former Mogadishu government's "Greater Somalia Policy," claiming the regions of neighbouring states inhabited by ethnic Somalis. It was a popular crowd-pleasing slogan and source of legitimacy in Mogadishu for successive Somali governments, but was forcibly rejected by the neighbouring states.

Internally, within Somalia, the reality was different. The short-lived Somali Republic (1960-69) and its parliamentary system soon fell victim to clan loyalties despite the tide of post-independence nationalism. In the 1967 elections, more than 80 mostly clan and sub-clan based political parties, competed for the spoils of office.² Corruption and nepotism became the hallmark of the ruling elite. In the context of a clan-oriented society, citizens were often manipulated to see benefits accruing to particular clan and sub-clan elites as benefits to their clan and by extension, to themselves, as opposed to other clans. In brief, the system did not work.

The fundamentalists among Somali's intellectuals have hit upon the concept of the Islamic 'Umma' or nation, uniting all Muslims, and distilled from it the idea of an Islamic state in Somalia, imposing unity across clan lines, and again, incorporating ethnic Somali –inhabited regions of neighbouring states. However, while almost all Somalis are Muslims, most Muslims are not Somalis, and the concept of the 'Umma,' or even of a special 'Umma,' only for Somalis, may not be the answer to the problem of a Somali unity, superceding clan identity. However, not all ideologies are rational or workable.

Another potential avenue towards overcoming clan-imposed disunity is through identifying – or inventing – a common adversary, outside the clan system, or better yet, combining the two. Fundamentalist intellectuals in Somalia therefore, are focusing on a double agenda, of establishing an 'Islamic state' in the form of an extremist theocracy in Somalia, and promoting a concept of Ethiopia as the common adversary of Somalis. In the context of the latter agenda, Al-Ittihad, of which the 'new' Council of the Islamic Courts" is a recent expression, has long engaged itself as a conduit for training and arms from Eritrea and Gulf-based fundamentalists for the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and other fundamentalist groups in Ethiopia.

In the meantime, in Mogadishu itself, the moderate façade of the ICU/SCIC is rapidly wearing off, as indicated by their attempts to impose fundamentalist values and behaviour on the local population, and local demonstrations against this. The Mogadishu residents were happy to see the warlords go, but they were not expecting the Islamic Courts to be transformed into an armed political group attempting to impose fundamentalist views and practices on Somali society. The current attempts to do so in the areas under ICU/SCIC control, could bode ill for human security in Mogadishu and eventually, for the ICU/SCIC itself.

²John Prendergast, *The Gun Talks Louder Than the Voice: Somalia's Continuing Cycles of Violence* (Washington, D.C. :Centre of Concern, 1994), p.47.

Mogadishu and central Somalia

Mogadishu and the central regions inhabited by the Hawiye clan, remain at the centre of Somalia's conflicts. The years of struggle among the Hawiye for control of Mogadishu the former capital, underlies much of the turmoil in these and neighbouring regions. The Hawiye themselves, and many others, often see this as a contest for national leadership. They prefer not to see the reality that even uncontested control of Mogadishu is no guarantee to succession to the rule of the Somali state, or even to its survival.

At the center of their struggle is the belief that control of the capital, or what used to be the capital, will position them to rule a restored state. This has made them the most vociferous opponents of a decentralized political model, arguing that it could lead to the breakup of the Somali state. The misguided focus of the international community on the Mogadishu faction leaders has encouraged them in this stand, which could be a major factor in a definitive disintegration of Somalia as a state.

The rise of the warlords and decline of human security and human development

The past 18 years in Somalia have been marked by wide-spread conflict, social disintegration, economic and state collapse, exacerbated by natural disaster. The clan-based rebel groups from different Hawiye sub-clans that captured Mogadishu in early 1991, forcing Siyaad Barre from power, soon began to fight among themselves for control of the capital. At the same time, they conducted massive ethnic cleansing of rival clans. The violence soon forced most of the city's non-Hawiye residents to flee to areas controlled by their own clans, or to neighbouring countries, further fragmenting the Somali polity, and whatever remained of the social fabric binding the modern sector of the population.

This initiated the disintegration of Somalia as an effective nation state, and one difficult to reassemble. It also led to the reinvigoration of the most extreme forms of ethnic politics led by a new class of warlords, who remain at the center of chronic conflict in Somalia. While the major warlord fac-

tions were centered on Mogadishu, other similar groups appeared in other regions of the south and north among the local clans, initiating local power struggles.

The revival of Al-Ittihad, particularly among the same Hawiye subclans, factors a new element into the Somali equation. Their focus on the pan-Somali card could bring wider constituencies into the jihadist fold. As in the case of Afghanistan's Taliban, sharing of ideology, resources, and short-term goals, has potential to enable the sublimation, at least temporarily, of tribal and clan animosities and feuds, in order to confront what is perceived as the more immediate adversaries. In this case they see their immediate adversaries as Ethiopia and Kenya, and think they can deal with each other later.

The decline of warlord power and relevance

One serious misconception that tended to confuse efforts to address the Somali crisis has been the assumption that "faction" and "clan" are necessarily the same. Most factions did depend on clan constituencies during the early years of civil strife, and membership in factions remains first and foremost a matter of clan affiliation. Nevertheless, the major factions as they found access to independent sources of revenue such as taxes, levies on the use of ports and airports, the lucrative trade in qat, and mutually supportive arrangements with major business interests, these independent resources enabled them to become much less reliant on their clans, and where they once required clan endorsement, they were able to act autonomously or distribute patronage to gain the support of key clan leaders.

At the same time the legitimacy of the factions was being challenged and alternative forms of leadership and authority were beginning to emerge. These new leaders ruled with the broad consent of their people and headed functional administrations with defined powers and terms of office, and supported by legitimate taxes and duties rather than extortion.

The armed factions needed conflict, insecurity and absence of the rule of law to maintain their control. When the factions were not fighting and security

improved, it gave space to communities and civil society to develop their own resources, enhance their independence and strength, eventually make the factions less relevant, as has happened in north-western and northeastern Somalia, and increasingly, in some areas of central Somalia.

The Jihadist groups are well versed in this strategy, and have considerably greater access to resources. Besides their sources from the fundamentalist charities, they have built up important business interests that have become significant sources of funding. In Mogadishu, and even in Bosasso, these groups and their adherents control large sectors of the local marketplace, often built up with initial capital from Islamist groups in the Gulf. Their businesses in Mogadishu, Bosasso and elsewhere, obtain resources on attractive terms from their colleagues in the Gulf, or even operate partnerships with them in a variety of trading businesses.

For the moment, at least, the seizure of Mogadishu has radically shifted the entire political landscape of southern Somalia. This has suddenly transformed the Islamic Courts Union from a small group trying to defend itself, into the major force in Somalia, the second, being the TFG. The ICU now potentially controls up to a third of the population of southern Somalia. The question has become what comes next? This has significant implications for peace and security issues in neighboring countries and the IGAD region.

The role of the TFG

Meanwhile, the IGAD-sponsored Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG), based in the small town of Baidoa, some 250 kms from Mogadishu for its own safety, has still not found its feet. It has a degree of recognition and little else. It has virtually no resources and little access to arms, and could credibly become the next victim of this latest debacle. Its supposed supporters, scattered across a gaggle of Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), having sat on their thumbs for over a year, are now fluttering about in confusion and disorder, without a clue as to what to do next.

Following the collapse of the warlords' initiative, the US formed a Contact Group (CG) with some of its European allies, together with Tanzania in an

attempt to address the new situation. But there is little indication that either the US or its Contact Group has any clear idea of what they can do to defuse the threat, or that they have any realistic understanding of the potential impacts on the region.

Their options are increasingly limited, between the TFG, and the Taliban-inclined ICU/Council of the Islamic Courts, and they appear to lack any defined policy. With the revelation that Sheik Aweys is the real leader of the ICU/Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts, the options are further narrowed. It would be difficult for the US and its allies to justify to their own core constituencies any collaboration with Aweys, whom the US accuses of being linked to its arch-enemy, Al-Qaeda.

The other alternative is the TNG, and for this to be viable, the situation needs to be addressed urgently, and in a number of ways, including increased funding and capacity building, to enable the TFG to function. A competent peacekeeping force could be helpful, if one could be found and quickly deployed, but this is unlikely to happen. To survive, the TFG needs funds and equipment to train and strengthen its own forces, and demonstrate capacity to take on some of the functions of a government. For example, creation of a credible police force and demobilization and reintegration of some of the militias, at least in the area where it is based, and resources on the basis of which it can promise the demobilization of some of the warlord and Islamist militias, reducing some of the threats that it faces.

The TFG needs increased recognition, both from the countries of the region and from international institutions. It also needs to give urgent attention to building stronger constituencies around its base in Baidoa, and the surrounding Bay and Bakool regions. This might be helped by urging international organizations to initiate quick impact rehabilitation efforts in partnership with the TFG in areas where security permits. The most likely alternative could be yet another round of civil war and humanitarian disaster in Somalia.

The most immediate threats to human security come from the spread of the ICU/CIC to new areas, and their rule in the areas already occupied.

Meanwhile, the TFG, created in Nairobi in October 2004, remains weak and unstable. A year after its return to Somalia, it is still unable to install itself in the capital, Mogadishu, due to insecurity. It is requesting African peacekeeping forces to restore security, but this is unlikely to happen.

The TFG has still not advanced far from the shaky and fractious clan-based coalition established in Nairobi in October 2004. It is hindered by that same clan basis, as well as by the lack of resources to establish any semblance of a functional administration, or a credible security force. This follows a long-standing trend, over the past 15 years successive externally driven attempts to revive the defunct Somali state have led to as many successive failures. The most recent such attempt brought forth the “Transitional Federal Government” (TFG), but without the support it needed to succeed or even to survive. The presumably benevolent external supporters seeking peace in the region also seem to have learned nothing new. They contributed generously to help create the TNG, but then failed to provide it with the necessary basic resources to become a functional entity.

Given the ongoing power struggles in Mogadishu among groups with militias, money and constituencies of their own, there were always questions as to how the TFG could hope to survive in Mogadishu with none of these. The answers to this were that it could not, and that it was likely to become part of the problem.

To establish itself on a national scale, the TFG first needs to establish control in Mogadishu, but thus far, it has little hope of doing so. In the short run, the future of the TNG will depend upon its being able to acquire the necessary resources to recruit and pay its own armed forces. The alternative could be the collapse of the TFG and the continuation of Somalia as a stateless haven for criminal and extremist elements, and potential threat to human security in the region

The TFG has repeatedly called for intervention of international peacekeepers to restore security, but with no significant response. It has also called, without success for lifting the UN embargo on arms shipments to Somalia to allow it to import

arms for its own security forces. In the absence of both, its prospects for survival appear exceedingly dim. If IGAD and the international community genuinely believe that the TFG offers Somalia’s best chance for peace, they need to address this anomaly, or see their gains evaporate.

Implications for the IGAD region

The Somali jihadists who control Mogadishu’s Islamic Courts Council, have long been patrons of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a jihadist group, recruited from a few sections of the Ogaden sub-clan. The Ogaden are the largest of the Darod sub-clans and mainly inhabit parts of the Ethiopian Somali Regional State, and northeastern Kenya. A much smaller proportion, live in the Middle and Lower Juba regions of southern Somalia. The jihadist attempts to radicalize some Ogaden groups, is aimed at both Ethiopia and Kenya.

In attempting to expand its constituency, the Al-Ittihad/CIC group has taken on the “Greater Somalia Policy” of past Somali governments as a key part of its ideology. It aims to forcibly incorporate the Ethiopian Somali Region and northeastern Kenya, together with Djibouti, into a Taliban-like Islamic state under its control. The Arab jihadists seen fighting alongside the Somali Islamist militias in the battle for Mogadishu are an integral part of that strategy, both for training the Somali militias and providing a disciplined backbone in combat.

The ‘Council of the Islamic Courts’ and Al-Ittihad, may or may not be technically the same thing, but for all practical purposes, they appear to be so. They share, at least in part, the same leadership, including Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, the same militia commanders, such as Aden Hashi Farah “Ayro,” and other Afghanistan veterans, directly or indirectly linked to Al-Qaeda, the same ideology; and the same tendency to forcibly impose extremist fundamentalist practices on the population of areas under their control. These groups, largely, but not entirely based on sections of the Abgaal and Habar-Gedir sub-clans of the Hawiye, have long considered themselves as engaged in a protracted war against Ethiopia, and need to be taken as such. The UN Security Council group responsible for monitoring the arms embargo, also reported that

Eritrea was involved in the supply of arms to the ICU/CIC and in facilitating collaboration between it and the ONLF. This is likely to further heighten the growing tension in the region. Part of the solution would be to enforce the arms embargo. But there is no indication that this is likely to happen.

The flow of arms to the ICU/CIC in violation of the international arms embargo, and the onward transmission of those arms to rebel groups or terrorists operating in neighbouring countries, provides those countries with a legitimate cause of concern for their own security. Ideally, the international community should help to address that concern by taking action to enforce the embargo, and thereby avert the danger of unilateral action by the affected countries.

Countries that have already been subject to cross-border attacks by the leaders of Al-Ittihad/CIC and other Al-Qaeda affiliates have a legitimate interest in preventive action to avoid a recurrence of such attacks. One aspect of this could be strong support and assistance by the international community to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) recognized by IGAD and the AU, as the legitimate government, to enable it to control Somalia's borders with Ethiopia and Kenya, and thereby prevent the jihadist militias from undertaking cross-border attacks and arms shipments, that might force those countries to respond unilaterally to address the threat to their own national security.

The stand of Al-Ittihad/CIC and its surrogates, whatever they may choose to call themselves at any particular moment is quite clear. They see themselves as engaged in a protracted, semi-clandestine war against Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent, Kenya, directly and through such surrogates as the ONLF, among others. This stand has considerable potential to lead to a widening of the ongoing conflict and the involvement of other countries.

One aspect of this is reflected in reports of new refugee movements from southern Somalia into Ethiopia and Kenya. Such movements are expected to grow with the expanding activity of Al-Ittihad, and could be accompanied by the infiltration of Al-Ittihad operatives into those countries, as has happened in the past. This could be a security problem at both country and eventually, regional level.

Al-Ittihad, in its various guises appears to maintain linkages with Al-Qaeda, or other Al-Qaeda linked jihadist groups, as sources of training and funds. Among others, this is indicated by the continuing flow of funds from fundamentalist sources in the Gulf and elsewhere, the continuing availability of Arab jihadist trainers and combatants, and broadcast exhortations from Al-Qaeda leaders to continue their struggle.

The longer-term strategy of the jihadi groups focuses on constituency-building through networks of fundamentalist madrasas, and social service providers to promote their ideology and alienate sectors of the population. This includes the use of terror, to eliminate or intimidate non-fundamentalist opinion; the recent assassination attempt against the President of the TFG is believed to be an example of this. The establishment of jihadist bases on or near the borders of neighbouring states provides ample opportunity for such activities, as both Ethiopia and Kenya have already experienced.

Addressing the threat

This needs to be addressed firmly through a stronger recognition of the TFG in the region and internationally. Making it clear that the TFG is the recognized depository of Somalia's sovereignty; and that as such it is ultimately responsible for controlling its territory and taking all necessary measures to ensure that it is not used for attacks against other states. Achieving this needs strengthening the capacity of the TFG to defend itself and control its territory through lifting the existing ineffective arms embargo, that prevents the TFG from legally acquiring the arms that it needs to defend itself and its territory, while not halting the flow of illegal arms to its opponents.

As the recognized government, the TFG needs to be assisted through strengthening its capacity to control its territory and prevent its use as a base for terrorist attacks against the security of neighbouring countries. In this context it needs support to enable it to recruit, train, arm and pay a small national defence force, to establish and maintain security within its territory and protect the civilian population.

One aspect of this could be strong support and assistance to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) recognized by IGAD and the AU, and the UN, as the legitimate government, to enable it to control Somalia's borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. This is needed to prevent the Al-Ittihad/CIC militias from undertaking cross-border attacks that might lead those countries to respond in kind to address the threat to their own national security.

This takes into account the reality that countries that have already been subject to cross-border attacks by the leaders of Al-Ittihad/CIC and other Al-Qaeda affiliates also have a legitimate interest in preventive action to avoid a recurrence of such attacks. Hassan Darir Aweys and the CIC make it clear that they see themselves as engaged in a protracted, semi-clandestine war against Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent, Kenya, directly and through such surrogates as the ONLF. This has always been an aim of Al-Ittihad, and now appears to have been embraced by the CIC.

The various actors involved in the creation of the TFG, also need to seek support to stabilize it and provide it with at least a minimal capacity to exercise the functions of government. In particular in terms of seeking support from donors interested in Somalia and peace building, to recruit and train a small cadre of civil servants for the TFG, including locally recruited civil servants for key regional and district-level needs, with a focus on governance, accountability and basic development. This might fit into areas of current interest of several donors in relatively secure areas, such as Somaliland and Puntland.

IGAD and member states, in the context of stabilization and peace building in Somalia should support the TFG to seek donor assistance for community driven development (CDD) in Bay and Bakool regions. This is an area of donor interest already being planned for Somaliland and Puntland. Carried out under the auspices of the TFG, and linked to peace building, it could considerably strengthen the position of the TFG in Bay and Bakool, and help to attract interest and support in neighboring regions, such as Hiran, Gedo, and eventually Middle Juba and Lower Shabelle.

Support to quick impact, labor-intensive projects to lessen the attraction of militia service, and enable a measure of demobilization and peace building (another donor interest), could also make an important contribution to strengthening the TFG, stabilizing those regions and reducing the spread of conflict and the influence of the jihadist groups. The countries of the region need to support the TFG directly and through IGAD to seek such support. The TFG also needs assistance to build its communication capacity to enable it to put its case across in a competent manner, at local and international levels.

In the absence of any viable alternative, salvaging the TFG appears to be the best available option for preventing a return to generalized conflict in Somalia. This would require:

- Strengthening the TFG in terms of a limited, but adequate access to the necessary arms, training and funds, to establish a small but reasonably effective force to maintain law and order in any areas under its control, and discourage any attempt by the Mogadishu faction to launch an armed attack to seize power by force.
- Capacity building support to the TFG to equip it to carry out some basic governmental functions.
- Agreement among the 'Frontline States' to enforce sanctions, including a ban on travel and financial transactions, against the leaders of any faction initiating a conflict with the IGAD-recognized TFG;
- Making it clear to the ICU/CIC/Al-Ittihad and other factions that the other states of the region, and the international community can only deal with them, through the TFG.
- Providing support, in cooperation with the TFG to strengthen existing local governance arrangements, and assist them to provide basic services.

The Somaliland Issue

In the longer term, the Somaliland issue also needs to be resolved, in the interest of sustainable peace and security. The 'Republic of Somaliland' though

internationally unrecognized, is clearly the most advanced manifestation of the Somali people's desire to shape their own government. It has a functioning administration with its own parliament, judiciary, police and defence forces, works as well as many African states, and considerably better than many. It has developed a relatively robust economy and a vibrant private sector, which is overtaking the government in the provision of such essential services as communication, transportation, water supply, health services and education. The most remarkable aspect of its progress is that it is taking place without international political recognition or substantial foreign assistance.

However, in the event of southern Somalia achieving some measure of consolidation as a unified state, under the TFG or its successors, the issue of Somaliland's independence is almost certain to arise. Should it do so before Somaliland achieves international recognition, it could involve eventual attempts by a southern regime to regain control by force. This would result in a new round of war between the two entities leading to instability, increased human insecurity and the possible collapse of both.

Development and human security

Sustainable peace in Somalia will also require addressing some of the major underlying causes of conflict. These include extreme deprivation, underdevelopment, and poverty leading to chronic human insecurity. Somalia's impoverishment is often linked to recurrent drought and desertification, a problem shared with southeastern Ethiopia including the Ethiopian Somali region and northeastern Kenya, that over the past three decades has devastated the livelihoods of millions of people across those regions and led families and entire communities into destitution. This has contributed to chronic unrest in many areas, as communities fight over diminishing pastures and water sources. It also provides an environment of desperation in which ethnic entrepreneurship and extremist elements thrive and creates conditions for promotion of conflict.

The challenge is to recognize the underlying development problems and seek means of addressing

them. These must eventually include development based on the cooperative exploitation of the regions' shared water resources, the Shabelle, and the Gennale-Dawa-Juba river systems, the principal resources available for effective poverty reduction in those adjacent regions of the Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. This is an area in which eventual collaboration between Somalia and its closest neighbours, for development of shared river basins, could bring substantial benefits for all, and enhance peace and human security in their region.

In the meantime, within Somalia, there is a need to revive the "peace dividend" concept of focusing aid- particularly in the form of 'quick impact' projects- for community driven development (CDD) in areas of relative stability and security, of which there are a considerable number in Somalia. The current UN/World Bank assessment mission in Somalia could provide a good starting point.

In the longer term, when stability is restored in Somalia, addressing the basic issues of sustainable rural livelihoods will need to be addressed through forms of regional economic integration that will encourage the cooperative development of the shared water resources of this drought disaster-prone region comprising Somalia, the Ethiopian Somali region, and possibly, the neighbouring areas of northeastern Kenya. These are inextricably linked in terms of ethnic ties, economic exchange and inter-dependence, shared natural resources, and the constant cross-border movement of their pastoral populations.

Conclusions

The rise in Somalia of the "Council of the Islamic Courts" as a new form of the armed extremist group, Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya, and the rapid expansion of Al-Ittihad controlled militias across southern and central Somalia, could pose significant threats to the security of the neighbouring countries, particularly Ethiopia and Kenya. The Al-Ittihad leadership, reportedly linked to Al-Qaeda, is believed to have played a role in past terrorist attacks in both countries.

The establishment of sustainable peace and human security in Somalia in the foreseeable future, will

require a significant effort on the part of those concerned, to strengthen the TFG or its successor to a level that can enable it to effectively control territory and disarm the various armed factions. This, being the case, the IGAD states and the international community, with interests in regional and human security, need to carefully weigh their options and assess the possible opportunities to assist the TFG to become an effective governing body, in the absence of any viable alternative.

This will require effective action to enable the TFG to acquire the capacity to defend itself, protect the civilian population from armed groups and restore order in the country. To do so needs lifting the existing ineffective arms embargo, that prevents the TFG from legally acquiring the arms that it needs to defend itself and its territory, while not halting the flow of illegal arms to its opponents.

As the recognized government, the TFG needs support to enable it to recruit, train, arm and pay a small national defence force, to establish and maintain security within its territory and prevent its use as a base for terrorist attacks by the CIC/Al-Ittihad or similar groups against the security of neighbouring countries. In this context, those countries have legitimate national security interests in helping to strengthen the TFG.

Such support is needed to prevent the Al-Ittihad/CIC militias from undertaking cross-border attacks that might lead those countries to respond in kind to address the threat to their own national security. In this context, the IGAD states and the international community, with interests in regional and human security, need to carefully weigh their options and assess the possible opportunities assist the TFG to become an effective governing body, sufficient security capacity to establish internal order and control its borders.

Donors could make an important contribution to reducing the causes of conflict through providing assistance to local communities in areas that have managed to establish relative peace and security to enable them to provide basic social services and improve livelihoods. This can play an important role in restoring human security in Somalia and reduce the availability of recruits for violent conflict.

Reviving the “peace dividend” concept of focusing aid- particularly in the form of ‘quick impact’ projects-for community driven development (CDD) in areas of relative stability and security, of which there are a considerable number in Somalia. The current UN/World Bank assessment mission in Somalia could provide a good starting point.

In the longer term, when stability is restored in Somalia, addressing the basic issues of sustainable rural livelihoods will need to be addressed through forms of regional economic integration that will encourage the cooperative development of the shared water resources of the drought disaster-prone region comprising Somalia, the Ethiopian Somali region, and possibly, the neighbouring areas of northeastern Kenya. These are inextricably linked in terms of ethnic ties, economic exchange and inter-dependence, shared natural resources, and the constant cross-border movement of their pastoral populations. These are linkages that if provided appropriate support, can have considerable potential for peace building and enhancement of human security in Somalia and the region.

InterAfrica Group

Center for Dialogue on Humanitarian, Peace and Development Issues in the Horn of Africa

P.O. Box 1631

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel: 251-11-551-1561/11-553-7602/04 Fax: 251-11- 553-7603

e.mail: iag@ethionet.et

www.interafricagroup.org

The briefings are available online: <http://www.interafricagroup.org/Archive.aspx>