

Somalia



2016 Country Review

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Chapter 1

Country Overview

Country Overview

SOMALIA

Somalia is located in Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, east of Ethiopia. It comprises Italy's former Trust Territory of Somalia and the former British Protectorate of Somaliland. In 1960, British Somaliland and Italian Somalia joined to form an independent Somalia. In 1961, Somalia adopted its first national constitution in a countrywide referendum, which provided for a democratic state with a parliamentary form of government based on European models. In 1969, a coup headed by Mohamed Siad Barre ushered in an authoritarian socialist rule, bringing an abrupt end to the process of constitutional democracy in Somalia. In 1991, President Siad Barre was overthrown by opposing clans who failed to agree on a replacement and plunged the country into lawlessness and clan warfare.

It should be noted that Somalia has had no real central government since 1991. Indeed, Somalia has lacked any internationally-recognized central government since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. In recent years, despite the establishment of a fragile transitional government, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords and Islamic militias.

In its heyday, this Islamic militia held sway in the early 2000s in Somalia, but was driven from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government of Somalia. Since that time, resurgent al-Shabab Islamists have been launching a violent insurgency. A ceasefire pact between the Somali government and al-Shabab in 2008 had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal.

In 2010, al-Shabab -- which was at that point allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying out terrorist acts outside national borders. Indeed, al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, thus indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya around the same period in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

In August 2011, al-Shabab forces were said to be withdrawing from the capital city of Mogadishu;

however, that exit did not augur an end to violence and terrorism as exemplified by the October 2011 attack on the Mogadishu government compound. That being said, an offensive by Somali government forces, aided by African Union troops and incursions from neighboring Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, placed hitherto unknown pressure on al-Shabab.

In 2012, al-Shabab announced it was officially joining al-Qaida, and effectively formalized its identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa. The group then continued its brutal assault in Somalia, attacking a high level national delegation as recently as the spring of 2012, and carrying out attacks in Mogadishu 2013.

In 2013, al-Shabab burnished its terrorist Jihadist credentials by carrying out a brazen and brutal assault on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, killing dozens of victims. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the shocking rampage of horror and bloodshed and promised that the Westgate massacre was just the "opening act" in campaign that was intended to go on and on, as the militant Islamist terror group sought to punish Kenya for its involvement in the regional military operation against al-Shabab. Indeed, al-Shabab was intent on extending its reach and carrying out retaliatory attacks on Kenya because of its military involvement in Somalia as part of the African Union mission.

In September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft to strike an encampment and a convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu, successfully eliminating Godane. But even the death of Godane did not bring an end to al-Shabab's brutality and barbarism.

In late 2014, al-Shabab remained active with the terror group's Jihadist inclinations manifest fully in the form of continuing attacks that targeted Kenya. Most of the 2014 attacks occurred in towns close to the border with Somalia and appeared to target non-Muslims, with Christians being the favored target for death.

In early 2015, al-Shabab was extending its Jihadist ambitions with a call for supporters to carry out terror attacks at popular shopping malls in the West. In fact, al-Shabab was urging sympathizers and allies to launch mall attacks reminiscent of its own Westgate massacre in Kenya to be carried out in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. But before such an end could take place, in the spring of 2015, Kenya was targeted again by al-Shabab, with more than 145 people dying Garissa University at the hands of al-Shabab terrorists. While Kenya vowed a strong response, it was apparent that al-Shabab continued to function and to carry out brutal terror cross-border attacks with relative impunity, even declaring a "long and gruesome" war against Kenya.

From the start of the insurgency in 2007, although no official figures are available, estimates suggest that tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been made homeless by

the fighting in Mogadishu. As people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, there are now as many as one million people are internal refugees in Somalia. With the state of lawlessness increasing in Somalia, a dire security situation plaguing the country, and the mass scale of population displacement, the United Nations warned that half the entire Somali population has been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. In more recent years, the situation can be characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

It should be noted that amidst this state of insecurity, Somalia in recent years has advanced a political transition plan, and as of 2015 appeared to have made strides as regards the functionality of the government.

It should also be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland---consisting of five districts in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Africa
Population:	10616380
Climate:	Principally desert; December to February- northeast monsoon, moderate temperatures in north and very hot in south; May to October- southwest monsoon, torrid in the north and hot in the south, irregular rainfall, hot and humid periods (tangambili) between monsoons.
Languages:	Somali (official) Arabic Italian English
Currency:	1 Somali shilling (So. Sh.\$) = 100 cents
Holiday:	Revolution Anniversary 21-22 October (1969), Republic Day is 26 June (1960)
Area Total:	637660
Area Land:	627340
Coast Line:	3025

Somalia

Country Map



Africa

Regional Map



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Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

Somalia's modern history began in the late 19th century, when various European powers began to trade and establish themselves in the area. The British East India Company's desire for unrestricted harbor facilities led to the conclusion of treaties with the sultan of Tajura as early as 1840. It was not until 1886, however, that the British gained control over northern Somalia through treaties with various Somali chiefs who were guaranteed British protection. British objectives centered on safeguarding trade links to the east and securing local sources of food and provisions. The boundary between Ethiopia and British Somaliland was established in 1897 through treaty negotiations between British negotiators and King Menelik.

During the first two decades of the 20th century, British rule was challenged through persistent attacks led by the Islamic nationalist leader Mohamed Abdullah. A long series of intermittent engagements and truces ended in 1920 when British warplanes bombed Abdullah's stronghold at Taleex. Although Abdullah was defeated as much by rival Somali factions as by British forces, he was lauded as a popular hero and stands as a major figure of Somali national identity.

In 1885, Italy obtained commercial advantages in the area from the sultan of Zanzibar and in 1889 concluded agreements with the sultans of Obbia and Caluula, who placed their territories under Italy's protection. Between 1897 and 1908, Italy made agreements with the Ethiopians and the British that marked out the boundaries of Italian Somaliland. The Italian government assumed direct administration. Italy kept Somaliland a protectorate in terms of official status, although in all but name the territory functioned as a colony.

Italian occupation gradually extended inland. In 1924, the Jubaland Province of Kenya, including the town and port of Kismayo, was ceded to Italy by the United Kingdom. The subjugation and occupation of the independent sultanates of Obbia and Mijertein, begun in 1925, were completed in 1927. In the late 1920s, Italian and Somali influence expanded into the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia. Continuing incursions climaxed in 1935 when Italian forces launched an offensive that led to the capture of Addis Ababa and the Italian annexation of Ethiopia in 1936.

Following Italy's declaration of war on the United Kingdom in June 1940, Italian troops overran British Somaliland and drove out the British garrison. In 1941, British forces began operations against the Italian East African Empire and quickly brought the greater part of Italian Somaliland

under British control. From 1941 to 1950, while Somalia was under British military administration, transition toward self-government began through the establishment of local courts, planning committees, and the Protectorate Advisory Council. In 1948 Britain turned the Ogaden and neighboring Somali territories over to Ethiopia.

In Article 23 of the 1947 peace treaty, Italy renounced all rights and titles to Italian Somaliland. In accordance with treaty stipulations, on Sept. 15, 1948, the Four Powers referred the question of disposal of former Italian colonies to the U.N. General Assembly. On Nov. 21, 1949, the General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending that Italian Somaliland be placed under an international trusteeship system for 10 years, with Italy as the administering authority, followed by independence for Italian Somaliland. In 1959, at the request of the Somali government, the U.N. General Assembly advanced the date of independence from Dec. 2 to July 1, 1960.

Meanwhile, rapid progress toward self-government was being made in British Somaliland. Elections for the Legislative Assembly were held in February 1960, and one of the first acts of the new legislature was to request that the United Kingdom grant the area independence so that it could be united with Italian Somaliland when the latter became independent. The protectorate became independent on June 26, 1960. Five days later, on July 1, it joined Italian Somaliland to form the Somali Republic. This marked the first time "greater Somalia" came into existence.

In June 1961, Somalia adopted its first national constitution in a countrywide referendum, which provided for a democratic state with a parliamentary form of government based on European models. During the early post-independence period, political parties reflected clan loyalties and brought a basic split between the regional interests of the former British-controlled north and the Italian-controlled south. There also was substantial conflict between pro-Arab, pan-Somali militants intent on national unification with the Somali-inhabited territories in Ethiopia and Kenya and the "modernists," who wished to give priority to economic and social development and improving relations with other African countries.

Under the leadership of Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, prime minister from 1967 to 1969, Somalia greatly improved its relations with Kenya and Ethiopia.

A Note on Somali Warfare:

Somalia has seen little peace in recent history. A violent conflict erupted between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1950 and was not resolved until 1961. Only a year later, a territorial war with Ethiopia re-ignited, lasting until early 1964. Parallel to this, Somalia was fighting a territorial war with Kenya between 1963 and 1967. A third war with Ethiopia over ethnic and religious autonomy erupted in late 1964. A fourth war with Ethiopia, over international power and relationships, erupted in 1976, lasting until 1978. Siad Barre managed to keep the peace with the help of an iron fist and United

States (U.S.) funding, but when the U.S. funding stopped in 1988, Somalia entered into a tremendous civil war. Since 1991 the country has been suffering from significant factional fighting in diverse parts of the country. Notably, both Somaliland and Puntland have formed their own governments and seceded, the latter achieving a fragile peace.

The United Nations-United States intervention in Somalia was a watershed event in the formulation of Western policy towards Africa. As pointed out by scholars Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, the public outcry in the U.S. following the death of 18 U.S. soldiers in Somalia in 1992 led to the refusal of the Clinton administration to get involved in Rwanda in 1994. As a result of the experience in Somalia, the U.S. has emphasized the need to maintain neutrality at all costs so as not to become embroiled in another civil war. This has been evidenced again and again in Ethiopia-Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Sierra Leone and elsewhere in Africa.

Note on History: In certain entries, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used. A full listing of sources is available in the Bibliography.

Political Conditions

Background: Somalia under Gen. Mohamed Siad Barre

The process of party-based constitutional democracy in Somalia came to an abrupt end on Oct. 21, 1969, when the army and police, led by Maj. Gen. Mohamed Siad Barre, seized power in a bloodless coup.

Following the coup, executive and legislative power was vested in the 20-member Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), headed by Maj. Gen. Siad Barre as president. The SRC pursued a course of "scientific socialism" that reflected both ideological and economic dependence on the Soviet Union. The government instituted a national security service, centralized control over information, and initiated a number of grassroots development projects. Perhaps the most impressive success was a crash program that introduced orthography for the Somali language and brought literacy to a large percentage of the population.

The SRC became increasingly radical in foreign affairs and in 1974 Somalia and the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of friendship and cooperation. As early as 1972, tensions began increasing along

the Somali-Ethiopian border. In the mid-1970s, the Western Somali Liberation Front, or WSLF, began guerrilla operations in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Fighting increased, and in July 1977, the Somali National Army (SNA), crossed into the Ogaden to support the insurgents. The SNA moved quickly toward Harer, Jijiga and Dire Dawa, the principal cities of the region.

Subsequently, the Soviet Union, Somalia's most important source of arms, embargoed weapons shipments to Somalia. The Soviets switched their full support to Ethiopia, with massive infusions of Soviet arms and 10,000-15,000 Cuban troops. In November 1977, President Siad expelled all Soviet advisers and abrogated the friendship agreement with the U.S.S.R. In March 1978, Somali forces retreated into Somalia; to date the WSLF continues to carry out sporadic but greatly reduced guerrilla activity in the Ogaden region.

Following the 1977 Ogaden War, President Siad looked to the West for international support, military equipment and economic aid. The United States and other Western countries traditionally were reluctant to provide arms because of the Somali government's support for insurgency in Ethiopia. In 1978, the United States reopened the U.S. Agency for International Development mission in Somalia. Two years later, an agreement was made that gave U.S. forces access to military facilities in Somalia. In the summer of 1982, Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia along the central border, and the United States provided two emergency airlifts to help Somalia defend its territorial integrity.

From 1982 to 1990 the United States viewed Somalia as a partner in defense. Somali officers of the National Armed Forces were trained in U.S. military schools in civilian as well as military subjects. Within Somalia, Siad Barre's regime became increasingly a victim of insurgencies in the northeast and northwest, whose aim was to overthrow his government. By 1988, Siad Barre was openly at war with sectors of his nation. At the president's order, aircraft from the Somali National Air Force bombed the cities in the northwest province, attacking civilian as well as insurgent targets. The warfare in the northwest sped up the decay already evident elsewhere in the republic. Economic crisis, brought on amid the spiral of insurgent and anti-insurgency campaigns, caused further hardship, while Siad Barre and his cronies looted the national treasury.

By 1990, little remained of the Somali Republic. The insurgency in the northwest was largely successful. Most notably, the United Somali Congress (USC) of Gen. Aideed succeeded at dislodging government troops from Mogadishu. The army dissolved into competing armed groups loyal to former commanders or to clan-tribal leaders. The economy was in shambles, and hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled their homes. In 1991, Siad Barre and forces loyal to him fled the capital and he died in exile in Nigeria.

The Collapse of Peace

Since 1991 when the military regime of Siad Barre was ousted, Somalia has been a country ensconced in chaos and civil war, fragmented by warlords. This chaotic situation has led to the loss of thousands of lives and an estimated two million Somalis have been displaced either by seeking refugee across borders or within Somalia.

In 1992, Gen. Aideed formed the Somali National Alliance, the NSA, together with four other factions. It was the first inter-clan and inter-factional political alliance and the SNA initially controlled most of southern Somalia. Aideed was a skilled strategist, but his army survived on looting. Food aid destined for famine areas in the south was continually looted at the port of Mogadishu. Former United States (U.S.) President George Bush responded later that year by launching Operation Restore Hope. Led by the Unified Task Force, or UNITAF, the operation was designed to create an environment in which assistance could be delivered to Somalis suffering from the effects of dual catastrophes—one man-made and one natural. UNITAF was followed by a United Nations operation.

Aideed saw the peacekeepers, and the U.S. specifically, as a threat to his power. He labeled the peacekeepers as the enemy. In June 1993, after a series of petty skirmishes, Aideed sought to oust the peacekeepers by killing 23 Pakistani soldiers of the United Nations (U.N.) contingent force. U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe responded by ordering the arrest of Aideed and committing U.S. troops to this mission. In addition, Howe put a price on Aideed's head in an effort to elicit support from rival clans. This was a mistake. Howe evidently was unaware of how volatile the ground was in Mogadishu and how well-entrenched Aideed had become. By early 1994 more than 100 peacekeepers including 18 U.S. soldiers were dead and two U.S. helicopter gunship had been shot down. The U.S. pulled its troops out of Somalia shortly thereafter.

The second effect of Howe's decision was to give the appearance that Aideed had successfully defeated both the United States military and the U.N. Aideed became a hero in the eyes of his supporters. He held a conference of all the clans and leveraged his new popularity to create a national interim government. In practice, however, Aideed controlled only a small portion of Somalia. Ultimately, rival clan leaders killed Aideed. His son, Hussein Mohamed Aideed, succeeded him. Ironically, the younger Aideed spent most of his life in California and served in the U.S. Marines.

By 1998, a tenuous peace had been established. In February 1998, however, the fragile peace achieved in the Sodere Conference failed. Hussein Mohamed Aideed and the Rahawein Resistance Army, or RRA, clashed in the regions of Baidoa and Huddor. A follow-up conference to the one held in December 1997, originally scheduled for March 1998, was postponed several times over the ensuing months. Ali Mahdi Mohamed officially declared the peace accord to be dead in mid-March 1998, due to Aideed's refusal to give up control of the Baidoa region. Soon after this declaration, more fighting broke out, on the Kenyan border between two other factions, and between two others in the south.

Shortly later, Hussein Mohamed Aideed, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, and Osman Hassan Ali Atto met to attempt to re-initiate the peace process. The three faction leaders met in Kenya in April to attempt to establish a transitional government. They met several times over the following months while various other factions continued fighting in all corners of the country and declaring self-rule.

In May 1998, several clans in the northeastern part of Somalia agreed to establish a joint administration for an autonomous region. The proposed name of the autonomous region was Puntland. Col. Abdullah Yussuf Ahmed was announced as president of Puntland in July. Leaders of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, Gen. Mohamed Absher Muse and Abdullah Boqor Muse, denounced the move. Since July 1998, Puntland developed a charter, which outlined a structure of government and a constitutional commission.

In early August 1998, Aideed and Ali Mahdi announced they had agreed on the establishment of a joint administration of Mogadishu. Osman Atto denounced the plan because he claimed that it was not representative for all factions, even though he was named a deputy chairman. In November, Libya announced that it would donate \$800,000 to fund the administration and the establishment of a police force, which was deployed in February 1999.

The United Nations envoy to Somalia visited Mogadishu in February and was shown that services had been developed, including a courthouse, prison and hospital. Usage of the seaport had been negotiated with the faction controlling the port. At the end of April, Ali Mahdi reported that the joint administration was going poorly due to financial problems. Moreover, an internal power struggle may have been at work -- as evidenced by an assassination attempt on Aideed in March.

Regionalism and Factionalism

In May 1999, the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland announced plans for the implementation of a multiparty system of government. Somaliland had declared itself a republic in 1991 following the overthrow of Barre. The republic introduced Islamic Shari'ah law in November 1998. At the time of the announcement, Somaliland had begun the registration of political parties but did not allow parties based on religious or clan affiliation.

In December 1998, Aideed and Ali Mahdi met in Libya with the leaders of Puntland to discuss plans for peace. No significant developments were reported. In March 1999, fighting broke out in Mogadishu between militias and forces employed by merchants. The faction led by Musa Sudi Yalahow attempted to levy taxes on merchants traveling to the marketplace after claiming to end banditry on the road. The merchants hired their own militia to avoid paying the tax. More than 40 people were killed in the first few days of the conflict.

In June 1999, Aideed's forces lost to the Rahanwein Resistance Army in the town of Baido in southeastern Somalia. Aideed accused the RRA of being backed by the Ethiopian army and claimed that they took the town in the belief that an Ethiopian rebel base was located there. The BBC reported that arms shipments into the Mogadishu port intended for Aideed were sent from Eritrea. It was also reported that Aideed's supporters retreated from factions moving in from the west that were allegedly backed by Ethiopia. Ethiopia denied all of the allegations. Throughout 1999, factional fighting continued across the country. Over the years, different clans who felt that they were alienated from, or denied access to state power, have subjected the search for peace in Somalia to criticism and opposition, sometimes violently.

Undoubtedly, it is for these reasons that various parties decided to seek a solution through constitutional means. In this regard, the convening of peace conference in neighboring Djibouti was a welcome effort although disagreements persisted.

The Arta Peace Conference

At the April-July 2000 Peace Conference in Arta in the country of Djibouti resulted in an agreement about the parameters of a transitional government. The Somali Support Committee, or SSC, declared that all clans and regions of Somalia were fully engaged and participated in the Somali National Peace Conference under an environment that was free and fair. Further, they stated that although warlords dominated all previous conferences, this conference was attended by clan elders, women, intellectuals and members of civil society.

The Challenges of the New Government

One of the outcomes of the Arta Peace Conference in Djibouti was the election of Abdiqasim Salad Hassan, Siad Barre's former interior minister, as president, by an interim-National Assembly on Aug. 25, 2000. He defeated his closet rival, Abdullahi Ahmed Addow by 145 votes to 92. The National Assembly comprises 245 members appointed by clan chiefs. Since the Arta Conference, there have been some steps taken towards creating a central administration in Somalia. The elected president Abdulkassim Salat Hassan returned to Mogadishu in September and on Oct. 8, 2000, named Ali Khalif Galayadh as prime minister. On Oct. 14, 2000, Galayadh named an interim government with 76 ministers drawn from different clans. Additionally, the Transitional National Assembly held its inaugural session in Mogadishu on Nov. 2, 2000. All in all, both the TNG and the TNA were given three years to prepare a new era for Somalia including constitution and institutions of governance.

Throughout 2001 the government of Abdiqasim Salad Hassan fought to maintain not only his position and the regime, but the validity of the institutions of the state itself. As the year ended, the

state appeared highly tenuous. Somalia faced no greater challenge than the strengthening and acceptance of the central state of Somalia itself.

On Nov. 12, 2001, President Abdulkassim Salat Hassan of the Transitional National Government appointed Hassan Abshir Farah as the Prime Minister of Somalia. Farah's appointment was a result of the sacking of Ali Khalif in October 2001 in a no-confidence vote in parliament for failure to restore peace in Somalia. One hundred and seventy-four members of the Transitional National Assembly took part in the no-confidence vote with 141 members voting for removal of Khalif and 29 members rejecting the motion. Hassan Farah was a former minister of internal affairs and security in the autonomous Puntland region. After supporting the Arta Peace Conference initiatives, he was appointed Minister of Water and Minerals in the TNG until his new appointment. Since this appointment, Farah announced that he would not appoint a new council of ministers within 30 days as stipulated in the Transitional Charter before a reconciliation conference scheduled for a later date.

There is evidence that the election of Hassan in 2000 did not receive widespread support. To begin with, the self-declared state of Somaliland distanced itself from the process saying that it is no longer part of Somalia. Also, the independent region of Puntland declared its total opposition to the Arta Conference decisions. Another fiercest dissent came from the warlords forming a group known as the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council, also called SRRC, comprising 42 members who met in Badoa to forge a united front against the interim government under the leadership of Hassan. The president of the separate regional administration of Puntland Col. Ahmed Abdullahi attended the meeting in Awassa, Ethiopia where the SRRC was formed. Other prominent warlords in SRRC include Osman Ali Ato, Musse Sudi Yolahow and Mohamed Hussein Aideed who together control large parts of the Somali capital Mogadishu. The SRRC, which was hosted by Ethiopia in March 2001, claimed that it was in the process of establishing a "national representative government" to spearhead national reconciliation.

The Quest for Self-Determination in Somaliland and Puntland

There is a significant reason to question the SSC claim that all clans and regions of Somalia were fully engaged and participated in the Somali peace conference. Hussein Mohamed Aideed, a prominent Somali faction leader, denounced the peace conference held in Djibouti. Both Somaliland and Puntland boycotted the Arta Peace Conference meeting and significant cross-accusations continued between warlords and non-clan leaders mostly on two issues: the nature of the government and the future of Somaliland and Puntland. The former problem is characterized by the Somali Peace Rally, or SPR, as an effort by Djibouti and Libya to capitalize on the perpetuation of warlord politics. While no doubt these countries would benefit from the continuation of their regional partnerships, this is a deeper structural problem. Djibouti and Libya are encouraging a unitary system based on consociational representation by clan leaders in the new

government. The SPR, and the Western powers, advocate a loose federal system with significant regional power. Under the latter, Somaliland and Puntland would have independent legislatures in a quasi-confederation pact.

A basic problem is that neither Somaliland nor Puntland accept either system. They have argued that any resolution that does not include three separate states is unacceptable. In a public statement, former Somali president and current Somaliland President Mohamed H. Ibrahim Egal reminded the international community that Somaliland and Somalia were distinct territories until 1960. It was only from 1960 to 1990 that a modest greater Somalia existed. Somaliland, he thus concluded, would not take part in or accept the outcome of the talks in Djibouti.

Abdullahi Yusuf, the leader of Puntland, made a similar statement. Both leaders made clear that the secessionist leaders do not recognize the Somaliland and Puntland "representatives" at the talks. In a bold comment, Egal compared the Somaliland supporters of the Djibouti talks to the Palestinians in the Jordanian cabinet who would be received back home with the same rancor.

On May 3, 2002, President Mohammed Ibrahim Egal died in a South African military hospital from complications after surgery. The vice president of the self-declared republic, Dahir Riyale Kahin, was appointed as the successor to the presidency on that same day.

Somali warlord Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and his troops have swept through the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. Colonel Yusuf's troops began their northward offensive on Monday, May 7, near the town of Garoweh. On Wednesday, May 8, the region's economic hub and port city, Bossasso, fell to Yusuf's troops without a fight. The region's rival leader, Jama Ali Jama, fled Bossasso to an undisclosed location before Yusuf arrived.

Issues of Concern

It needs no emphasis that the search for peace in Greater Somalia is of utter necessity if other socio-political issues have to be addressed. It is evidently clear that without peace, the country's overall development will continuously deteriorate. The second related issue is that because of lack of peace, humanitarian conditions are bleak. According to U.N. agencies, an estimated one million Somalis are suffering from drought conditions and starvation. With the continuing escalation of violence, the situation is becoming untenable. The situation in Somalia has thusly remained very fragile. Several militia leaders have continued to challenge TNG legitimacy. Overall the security situation in Somalia, and particularly Mogadishu, has witnessed several armed clashes between different militias as between militia and the newly created TNG police force leading to death of many civilians. The interim administration still has had little influence outside the capital. Powerful factions control most of the country.

Developments in 2002

In April 2002, a cadre of warlords located in the southwestern part of Somalia took control of six districts and declared itself the "Southwestern Regional Government." In August 2002, fighting broke out on the northeastern part of the country, close to the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. The violence between factions in this area seemed aimed at establishing supreme control over the area.

During 2002, representatives from international bodies, such as the United Nations, expressed grave concern about the ever-increasing death toll scattered across Somalia. The violence was not limited to the capital of separatist enclaves. Instead, clan fighting was widespread. In September 2002, even a cabinet meeting was interrupted when rebels invaded the meeting and opened fire. Participants at the meeting were forced to flee. The incident occurred because locals resisted the government's attempts to establish administrative structures aimed at restoring order to chaotic life in Somalia. Residents, however, eschewed any such attempts of external "control."

As well, United Nations staff were abducted by gunmen. Notably, on Tuesday May 8, 2002, United Nations officials suspended their activities, including humanitarian aid, in the Somali capitol of Mogadishu. The announcement came after the kidnapers of United Nations staff member, Muhammad Ali Adukar, refused to respond to the United Nations' demands for his release. The United Nations was greatly concerned over the health of Muhammad Ali Adukar who has been in captivity since April 28. Since then, other United Nations staffers were also abducted.

By September 2002, the United Nations had issued innumerable condemnations of Somalia for the abuses against United Nations' staffers. As well, the international body called for a war crimes tribunal to investigate the gross human rights violations that had ensued in the last decade.

Following a two-day impasse between the warlord, Musa Sude Yalahow, and the governing administration of Somalia, there were violent clashes in Mogadishu. Several people were reported either dead or wounded, after forces loyal to Yalahow, controlling the area to the north of the Somali capital, Mogadishu, attacked positions held by militiamen belonging to the government. Hundreds of families were displaced in the fighting. Earlier, hundreds of gunmen loyal to Yalahow and led by militia leader, Mohamed Dhereh, attacked the home of the Interior Minister Dahir Dayah. The minister was not injured in the attack.

As such, Somalia continued to exist as a land of battling enclaves ruled by armed militias. The transitional government, led by President Abdiqasim Salad Hassan, had little control over Somalia. Meanwhile, factional leaders, such as Yalahow, continued to count on military support from neighboring Ethiopia.

Peace talks were scheduled for mid-September in Kenya. They were subsequently postponed until October 2002. Kenya's Special Envoy to Somalia stated that the main objective of the peace talks was not the organization of a power sharing agreement, but rather, the construction of a viable state with structures, institutions and enterprises that would facilitate a decentralized unity government. Given Somalia's recent history, it is difficult to imagine that this objective can realistically be achieved.

Islam in Somalia

Some mention should be made of the role of Islam in Somali politics. Nearly all Somalis are Muslim (though most practice some syncretism blend with indigenous beliefs). Islam has become both a positive civic force, horizontally transecting inter-clan rivalries, as well as a negative force, drawing new lines of contention between the democratic rule of law and the Islamic laws of Shariah. As an example, the small market town of Lukh Ganana in the southwestern Gedo region is on record as being the hottest place on earth. It has, however, been one of the few Somali towns free of heated political outbreaks. When Siad Barre fell, Aideed moved into Lukh Ganana, but he was not yet strong enough to hold it. The residents pushed him out in 1992. Since then they have been governed by a self-appointed Islamic administration that transcends warlord loyalties.

The bars have been shut down, the cinema was turned into a mosque, the chewing of khat (a mild narcotic) was forbidden, and women began wearing a "hejab" (Muslim veil). The new administration has become one of the most effective in Somalia. They see their town as a model for the whole of Somalia. There are conflicts, however. Not everyone in Lukh Ganana is ready to commit to the Shariah. Both alcohol and khat are consumed and chewed respectively in private. As peace is achieved, people will make greater demands -- including freedoms. They may tire of the restrictions if their faith falls short of the civic propensities of Islam. Moreover, in the context of global politics, the West greatly fears the expansion of Islam. It will do anything in its power -- including undermining a world view that lends itself to regional stability -- to avoid the rise of an Islamic state in Somalia.

Developments in 2003

In June 2003, one day after the announcement of the impeachment of the incumbent president, Abdulkassim Salat Hassan, the speaker of Somali's interim parliament declared himself the new president of the country. Abdallah Derow Isaak said he would lead Somalia until a new president could be officially appointed; however, it is highly unlikely that his announcement will have resonance in a country that has been functioning without a central government since the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991. To date, the transitional national government holds only partial control over of the capital city of Mogadishu.

On April 19, 2003, the presidential election for the Republic of Somaliland (the northern part of the country) peacefully concluded. According to the Electoral Commission the UDUB party of the present government won by 80 votes from the nearest rival, the KULMIYE party. On May 16, 2003, the first elected president and vice president of the Republic of Somaliland were sworn in Hargiesa. The president H.E. Dahir Riyale Kahin and the vice president H.E. Ahmed Yusuf Yasin were to hold their respective posts for five years.

In July 2003, after holding negotiations in Kenya with international mediators, representatives of Somalia's many factions proposed a plan for a new government. The plan called for the establishment of a federal government; a transitional parliament of 350 members; a parliament-appointed president; and a president-appointed prime minister. The Transitional National Government's (TNG) Prime Minister Hassan Abshir Farrah signed the agreement, which garnered wide support from the rest of the government. Only President Hassan rejected the plan, calling it undemocratic and anti-Islam. The president walked out of the talks later in July and said he would not step down as was called for in the plan. The TNG mandate expired in August and the president said he would not step down until a new parliament and government were in place. The president's delegation abandoned the talks altogether in November.

Developments in 2004

Mediators invited the president to return to a special 10-day conference in January 2004. From this conference a new government plan emerged. Under the new plan the parliament would have 275 members to be selected by clan leaders and warlords. The president agreed to the plan and said he would turn over power to the parliament when it was established. After months of negotiations, all but eight seats in the parliament were filled by September 2004. Shariff Hassan Sheikh Adan was elected speaker.

Twenty-eight candidates were in the running before the mid-October presidential elections in 2004. The most prominent candidates were: interim-President Abdulkassim Salat Hassan; Puntland leader, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed; and former Ambassador to the U.S., Abdullah Adow.

Following the elections, a new government was formed. It was headed by President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Ghedi. Movement toward peace and normal government was discussed during this period.

Meanwhile, as leaders and the majority of the country's warlords were meeting in Kenya, violence continued throughout much of Somalia in 2004. Sixty were killed in heavy fighting in Mogadishu in May between the fighters of Musa Sudi Yalahow and Bashir Raghe. Thousands were displaced within the city. Thirty were killed in fighting near the border of Kenya in the west and rival militias

fought over the port of Kismayo in September. The forces of General Morgan, an infamously brutal warlord, fought the Jubba Valley Alliance for Kismayo until they were driven back. Morgan then left the country to join the peace talks in Kenya. He was the last major warlord to do so and one of the few to bypass a run for the presidency.

Some fighting was reported between militias of Puntland and Somaliland in September 2004. The fighting was apparently over the disputed Sool region, which is claimed by both.

Developments in 2005

As Somalia prepared to re-establish its government at home in early 2005, it was agreed that 6,800 peacekeeping troops from Uganda and Sudan would be sent to Somalia to set up the new government in that country. Sudanese and Ugandan troops would later be followed by troops from the African Union, however, no dates for the deployments were offered. The Ugandan foreign Minister said that the decision (to use troops from those two countries rather than from bordering countries) had been made in order to honor the sensitivities of the Somali people.

Reportedly, the president of Somalia's president was willing to accept troops from neighboring states; however, the Somali parliament vociferously opposed his position. The Somali parliament, which was meeting in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, voted against President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed's decision to deploy peacekeepers from Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti in Somalia. Meanwhile, Somali warlords warned they would attack troops from neighboring states, most notably from what they consider to be their biggest rival -- Ethiopia -- if they formed part of the peacekeeping force.

It should, be noted that Somalia's government and parliament convened in Kenya because the Somali capital city of Mogadishu was regarded as too dangerous. The measures were oriented toward the plan to relocate the government and parliament, headed by President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Ghedi, in Somalia. That said, it would be the fourteenth time in 13 years that such an attempt was made; the country has been ravaged by clan warfare, warlordism and lawlessness for that period. The key challenges in this regard include: security in the capital city of Mogadishu, the deployment of foreign peacekeepers, and whether the \$77 million relocation budget can be met. These key challenges sit amidst the central question of whether the time is finally right for the Somali government to return from exile.

In late October 2005, Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi announced a decision to close certain airstrips in order to improve law and order in Somalia. In the aftermath of the announcement, Somali warlord, Muse Sudi Yalahow, threatened to shoot down any plane flying over the capital city of Mogadishu. Primarily, the warlords did not want to lose any of the much-needed revenue derived from the use of airstrips to transport items, such as the mild narcotic leaf, called khat. For

the government, the retaliatory move by the warlords could present risks since flights from Kenya, where government members often operate in exile, would have to fly over Mogadishu in order to reach Jowhar, an area not controlled by rebels that functions as a temporary capital for the government.

The establishment of a transitional parliament and government in 2004 included various Mogadishu warlords, such as Yalahow, who was given the position of Minister of Trade. These measures, however, have done little to abate the overall lawlessness and state of anarchy that has plagued Somalia since 1991.

In November 2005, three people were killed in an apparent assassination attempt on the prime minister in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu. Prime Minister Gedi, who was on a visit to Mogadishu from Jowhar, escaped unharmed.

Developments in 2006

The Somali capital city of Mogadishu was wracked by violence in February 2006. Fighting between warlords, Islamic militants and a newly-emerging group called the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, has been on the rise -- contributing to at least 10 deaths on Feb. 18, 2006 when rocket-propelled grenades and anti-aircraft guns were fired.

The warlords, some of whom enjoyed positions in Somalia's transitional government, reportedly forged alliances with the new group, which was embroiled in a battle with the Islamic militants and its associated courts. The militants were accused of harboring ties to the terrorist group, al-Qaida, and also of murdering moderate Muslim scholars. The upsurge in violence was regarded as the most significant in recent years, leading to an exodus of families from the capital city. In an effort to stem the tide of chaos, Culture Minister Abdi Hashi Abdullahi released a statement saying, "We remind the warring sides that no one ever won a war during the past 15 years of fighting."

Also in February 2006, Somalia's transitional parliament convened inside the country for the first time since it was formed in Kenya in 2004. It was an attempt by the government to assert some degree of authority after years of ongoing conflict. The meeting took place in a food warehouse in the central town of Baidoa, rather than in the dangerous capital city of Mogadishu, which was under the control of militias, warlords and other factions. While the majority of the members of parliament were present, the meeting was not attended by the powerful warlords who held sway in Mogadishu.

The location of the meeting was a key consideration, not only because of security concerns, but also because of the political symbolism. President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, Prime Minister Mohamed Ali Gedi, and their allies, wanted the seat of government to be in Jowhar rather than in

the lawless and chaotic capital city. Others, such as Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, countered that the president did not have the authority to change the seat of government from Somalia's capital of Mogadishu. As well, there were factional disputes about whether or not foreign peacekeepers should be brought in to provide much-needed security for the country.

At the assembly, the president said, "This is a historical opportunity for the Somalia parliament, government and the people." He went on to state, "Let us choose between serving our people or being put on the bad list of history as people who promoted confrontation among Somalis and lacked the skills to administer a modern Somalia."

In March 2006, a dispute broke out in the northern suburbs of the Somali capital city of Mogadishu between the alliance of controlling warlords and Islamic militia fighters. For about 15 years, the city had been the site of conflict and violence with rival warlords and other interest groups vying for dominance.

The emergence of Islamic militias, which advocated a system of Islamic courts as a means to bring law and order to the chaotic city, served only to complicate the situation. In order to assert power, the Islamists took control over Mogadishu's al-Maan port and blocked access to key roads in the city. Meanwhile, previously-fighting warlords were unexpectedly united in their opposition to the Islamic militia, accusing the group of killing Muslim moderates and otherwise abusing people.

The conflict between the militias and the cadres of warlords led to a particularly marked increase in violence. Indeed, over 70 fatalities and over 200 injuries were reported to have taken place in the space of days during March 2006. The situation appeared to have reached some resolution following a ceasefire brokered by the clan elders.

Violence erupted in Mogadishu again in May 2006 between rival militias. Fighting between warlords and Islamist militias went on for a week, with both parties trying to control a strategic roadway leading out of Mogadishu. The violence became so acute that thousands of people fled their homes, leaving the northern suburbs of the city a virtual ghost town. As well, up to deserted 150 people were reported to have been killed in the cross-fire of shootouts between the two factions. In one particularly disturbing case, a child and a pregnant woman were killed in the crossfire of the violence. Meanwhile, hospitals officials warned that their supplies were being exhausted

This particular spate of bloodshed was sparked when a cadre of warlords attacked a vehicle carrying Islamic court officials. Warlords in Somalia, which controlled the capital city for years, created the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism earlier in 2006. The establishment of the alliance appeared to have been spurred by the rising ascendancy of Islamist militias, which (as noted above) restored some stability to the war-torn city of

Mogadishu. A power struggle between the two factions ensued -- with both sides flinging accusations at one another. While the warlords accused the Islamist militias of providing safe haven for foreign extremists and terrorists associated with al-Qaida, the Islamists accused the warlords of being in cahoots with the United States.

While the United States neither confirmed nor denied the claim that it backed the warlords, it said that it would work with individuals or groups committed to fighting terror. The location of a base for an American anti-terrorism task force in nearby Djibouti only added to speculation that the United States may have forged some sort of agreement with the Somali warlords. Meanwhile, a United Nations report stated that an unnamed country was in violation of the governing arms embargo on Somalia -- presumably providing it with arms or weaponry.

The Somali capital city of Mogadishu enjoyed some calm by mid-May 2006 following agreement on ceasefire. The agreement came after a week of heavy fighting between warlords and Islamist militias, when President Abdullahi Yusuf called on government ministers -- some of whom also function as warlords -- to stop the violence.

On May 26, 2006, the Somali capital of Mogadishu was hit by fresh violence as militias became embroiled in gun battles, leaving over 60 people dead, scores more injured and thousands homeless. A day later, further clashes left over a dozen people dead. This spate of violence was centered in the districts of Daynile and Galgalato and involved some of the heaviest fighting in years. It was the latest episode of bloodshed involving the ongoing power struggle between warlords and Islamic militias in Somalia. The flare-up of violence suggested that efforts by clan elders to mediate between the two factions failed to yield any lasting truce.

Somalia's head of government, interim Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi, responded to the situation in Mogadishu by ordering four cabinet ministers (known to be warlords) to return to the seat of the transitional government in Baidoa. The prime minister apparently issued formal letters of warning to the ministers, promising legal action if they did not follow his summons. Soon thereafter, the ministers were dismissed for failure to comply.

In another development, warlord Mohamed Qanyare Afrah left his base at Dayniile in Mogadishu and headed for Jowhar. Fearful that Jowhar was about to become the newest site of another battle, the United Nations withdrew its aid staff from that town. Meanwhile, warlords seized control of a hospital some time earlier, resulting in calls from the Islamic militias to vacate the facility. The United Nations criticized the seizure of the hospital as being a violation of international law.

By the start of June 2006, Somalia's situation showed signs of further chaos when Islamic militias seized control of Balad -- a town on the outskirts of Mogadishu. It had been under the control of a warlord, Muse Sudi Yalahow, who was also the Minister of Trade in the transitional government.

At least 15 people were killed in Balad. Yalahow's cadre was forced to flee and were said to be heading in the direction of the town of Jowhar. The location of Balad, at the entry of a roadway to the country's most fertile regions, made its capture a strategic victory for the Islamic militias. Thus, it marked a significant shift in the power struggle plaguing Somalia.

Then, on June 5, 2006, Islamic militias claimed that they had control over Mogadishu. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the leader of the Union of Islamic Courts, announced that the control of Mogadishu by warlords was over and he called for acceptance of the new leadership. In this regard, he said, "The Union of Islamic Courts are not interested in a continuation of hostilities and will fully implement peace and security after the change has been made by the victory of the people with the support of Allah." Amidst this announcement came reports that some Mogadishu-based warlords had shifted their alliances to the Islamists. Interim Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi said that his government wanted to have talks with the Islamic militias.

In mid-June 2006, both the African Union (AU) and diplomats from the West agreed to send a team to Somalia to assess the possibility of deploying peacekeepers in that country. In this regard, the AU Peace and Security Commissioner, Said Djinnit, noted that there was concurrence within the international community for the notion of offering support to the interim government of Somalia.

The move came on the heels of the aforementioned power shift in the capital city of Mogadishu in which Islamist militias seized control from the warlords. Meanwhile, the interim government, which has been trying to operate outside the capital city where it held no sway, was in the midst of trying to sort out how -- or if -- it could engage with the prevailing Islamist militias. While the deployment of international peacekeepers would clearly be helpful in supporting the authority of the interim government, there were fears that conflict between the peacekeepers and the militias was sure to follow. Nevertheless, there were tentative moves oriented toward joint dialogue between the two parties.

In the backdrop of these developments were allegations that Ethiopian troops had crossed the border and had been seen in Baidoa -- the town to the north of Mogadishu where the interim government was seated. Ethiopia's government (under Zenawi) has been regarded as an ally of Somalia's interim President Abdullahi Yusuf. In fact, Ethiopia aided President Yusuf in defeating an Islamist militia back in the 1990s. Thus, rumors of Ethiopian troops in Somalia undoubtedly evoked questions about what strategy was being planned by the interim government as it grappled with the ascendancy of the Islamists. For its part, Sheikh Ali Hassan, a leader with the Islamist militia, responded to the reports of Ethiopian troops possibly being on Somali territory with a warning as follows: "We call on the international community to pressure Ethiopia [to] remove its troops from Somalia territory in order to avoid another conflict."

Regardless of the cause -- either because of conflict between peacekeepers and the militias, or

between Ethiopian forces and the militias -- the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, warned that any conflict in Somalia would surely yield catastrophic results.

In late June 2006, Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts, which had taken control Mogadishu, created a new power structure. A radical cleric, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, was chosen to head the legislative council. Sheikh Aweys has been identified as being on the United States' list of terrorists. It was also reported that he had once led an armed group, al-Itihaad al-Islamiya, which the United States has said has links to the terrorist base, al-Qaida. A more moderate choice, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, was selected to chair the executive committee. Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has been viewed as one of the central leaders behind the efforts carried out by the Union of Islamic Courts.

In July 2006, Somalia's interim President Yusuf boycotted talks with the Union of Islamic Courts, saying that they had contravened against an established ceasefire. Yusuf reversed his stance when the International Contact Group, composed of both Western and African countries, declined sending peacekeepers to Somalia and instead urged broad-based talks among Somali interest groups. Indeed, the Somalian leader withdrew his opposition to talks with the Islamists who had take control of Mogadishu, paving the way for multi-party negotiations.

Later in the month [July 2006], Islamists were apparently advancing on the town of Baidoa, where the interim government has been based because of the impossibility of operating from the capital city of Mogadishu. They subsequently withdrew and said that they did not intend to attack the city, despite their increasing control over the southern part of the country.

Meanwhile, as noted above, the ascendancy of the Islamists had become the source of concern for the government of Ethiopia, which was allied with the interim government and opposed Islamist militias. Soon after the news emerged that the Islamists were approaching Baidoa, there were new warnings from Ethiopia that it would send its troops into Somalia to protect the interim government.

Despite the fact that the likelihood of an attack by Islamists on Baidoa seemed to have subsided and the authorities in that town confirmed that the situation on the ground was calm, there were reports that Ethiopian forces were at the government's base in that town. There were subsequent reports that Ethiopian troops were identified in the town of Wajid, purportedly to protect the transitional government. That said, neither the government of Somalia nor the government of Ethiopia confirmed this development.

In response, Somali Islamist leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys called for a "holy war" to expel the Ethiopian troops, saying, "I am calling on the Somali people to wage a holy war against Ethiopians in Somalia." As well, the head of the Union of Islamic Courts security contingent warned that scheduled peace talks would be cancelled if Ethiopian forces did not leave Somalian territory.

On the ground in Mogadishu, there were rallies to celebrate the increasing stability that was emerging in the city under the leadership of the Islamists. Observers also pointed to the fact that cars were now traveling in the city without having to pass through checkpoints -- a significant shift from the past years when checkpoints interrupted passage within Mogadishu. The demonstrators also called on Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia.

During the last week of July 2006, close to 20 members of the transitional government -- cabinet ministers and deputy ministers -- reportedly resigned. Their action was spurred by the presence of Ethiopian troops in Baidoa, their opposition to the notion of foreign peacekeepers in the country, as well as differences in dealing with the Islamic militias. Although some members of government attempted to forge an agreement with the Islamic militias to convene talks, there was no receptivity on the part of the prime minister. One cabinet minister, Public Works Minister Osman Ali Atto, even went so far as to characterize Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi as "an obstacle to progress." Parliamentarians were thusly planning to advance a no confidence motion in the transitional government, which was itself looking increasingly weakened.

On July 28, 2006, Abdalla Derrow Issak, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs in Somalia's interim government was shot to death in the town of Baidoa, where the government has been seated. Prime Minister Gedi promised that those responsible for killing his colleague would be brought to justice. Despite this promise, mass protests ensued in the streets of Baidoa, complete with violence and vandalism. For its part, the Union of Islamic Courts, which increasingly took control of the capital city of Mogadishu, condemned the death of minister and denied playing any part in the shooting.

The killing of the Derrow Issak added to what was becoming a governmental crisis, since, as noted above, a number of government ministers had resigned and the prime minister was, himself, facing a no confidence motion. That motion, along with the resignations from cabinet, had been triggered by opposition to the prime minister's refusal to enter into talks with the Islamic Courts.

Despite these differences within government and the climate of rising opposition against him, the prime minister survived the confidence vote on July 30, 2006. The no confidence motion required 138 votes to pass, however, it received only 126. As such, the prime minister held on to his position. While Gedi responded to the vote by saying, "I respect those who voted against me and I respect those who voted for me," a number of parliamentarians became embroiled in physical fighting on the floor of parliament.

In mid-August 2006, Ethiopia said that Islamic militias were making disturbing gains in Somalia. Indeed, the Islamic militias, which had already taken control of key towns including the capital of Mogadishu, had advanced northwards toward Gaalkayo. Ethiopia also said that too much power was being placed in the hands of the chairman of the Union of Islamic Courts -- Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Ethiopia warned that the transitional Somali government was at risk of being made

irrelevant, while the country fell into the hands of Islamist terrorists. A statement by a senior information official for the government of Ethiopia said, "Any move which would be detrimental to the national interests of the country [Ethiopia] would not be tolerated." This expressed statement evoked fears that the country would militarily intervene into Somali affairs, thus contributing to the possible outbreak of a full-scale war in the region.

Earlier, there were reports (noted above) that Ethiopian troops had entered into Somalia. There were other reports that six armored divisions of the Ethiopian army were deployed along the border -- presumably as a show of support by Ethiopia's government to the transitional Somali government. With Islamist militias reported to be advancing in Somalia, it appeared that Ethiopia made good on its promise to intervene. Ethiopian troops were said to be moving toward the town of Baidoa -- the seat of the transitional government of Somalia -- on August 20, 2006. Ethiopia, which was aligned with the transitional Somali government, said that it would not allow Islamist militias to continue to hold sway in Somalia. For its part, the Somali transitional government denied the presence of Ethiopian troops in its jurisdiction.

In early September 2006, the situation shifted somewhat when Somalia's interim government forged an agreement with the Union of Islamic Courts to create a national army. The deal was reached following talks in Sudan that had been mediated by the Arab League. Those meetings were regarded as a positive development since they resulted in the first face-to-face discussions between the transitional government and the Islamists since June 2006. Another round of talks was scheduled for October 2006. At that time, the two sides were scheduled to flesh out details pertaining to power-sharing and security. Still, the existing agreement to form a national army was just one aspect of a larger concord, which included a pledge to eschew foreign aid, as well as joint recommitment to a previous truce.

The reference to foreign aid was specifically aimed at reducing the risk of intervention by other countries into the complex scenario in Somalia. At issue was the claim that the weakened interim government of Somalia was being aided by Ethiopian troops and equipment, for the purpose of staving off the advance of the Islamist militias into territory controlled either by warlords or the transitional government. But complaints about foreign intervention were also being levied by the Somali government. At the other end of the equation, there were increasing suggestions that arms were flowing to the Islamist militias in violation of an embargo. Some experts intimated that the weapons from Iran and some Arab countries were entering Somalia via Eritrea. Although the Eritrean government denied the charges that it was supplying arms to Islamist militias, the transitional government of Somalia reacted by declaring its support for an Eritrean rebel group, Eritrean Liberation Front.

As the interest groups entrenched themselves into opposing enclaves, anxieties increased about regional conflict in the region. Notably, observers began to speculate that Ethiopia and Eritrea were resuming their hostilities and using Somali terrain as the proxy for a return to war. The presence of

Ethiopian and Eritrean military interests in Somalia served only to magnify the depth of the problem. In fact, according to the United Nations, there were more than 8,000 Ethiopian troops operating in Somalia as allies of the weak transitional government. Meanwhile, approximately 2,000 Eritrean troops were said to have been earlier deployed to Somalia to assist the Islamic Courts. With the risk of a regional conflict at hand, the agreement discussed above was viewed as very necessary to diffusing tensions.

On September 18, 2006, Somalia's President Abdullahi Yusuf survived an apparent assassination attempt when successive car bombs exploded at a time when the president's convoy were outside parliament in Baidoa. Over a dozen people were killed in the attacks, including the president's brother.

Because of President Yusuf's poor relations with the Union of Islamic Courts, which controlled most of southern Somalia, there were some suspicion that Islamic militants may have been responsible. The timing of the attacks, however, suggested that it would not have been in the interests of the Islamic militants to alienate the country's official leadership. Indeed, the bomb blasts occurred at a time when parliamentarians were to set approve a new cabinet, and more significantly, to debate the possible inclusion of the Union of Islamic Courts within government. Somali Foreign Minister Ismail Hurre underscored this point when he said that whomever was behind the attacks wanted reconciliation efforts with the Union of Islamic Courts to fail.

With questions still abounding about who might be responsible for the attacks, analysts drew attention to a threat by Baidoa's controlling warlord about ten days prior. Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade had warned that his forces would evict the government by force if they did not leave Baidoa voluntarily. Whether or not this warlord was responsible for the assassination attempt was not known.

Meanwhile, the Union of Islamic Courts consolidated its control of southern Somalia by taking control of the port city of Kismayo in the last week of September 2006. Most residents had already fled the city, and as the Islamic militants approached, government forces withdrew. There was no violence reported.

In October 2006, relations between Somalia and Ethiopia returned to the fore as a result of allegations that Ethiopian forces had attacked a Somali town. The Union of Islamic Courts accused Ethiopian troops of attacking the town of Bur Haqaba, located on the road between the seat of government in Baidoa and the official capital of Mogadishu (now held by the Islamists). As a result, the Islamists promised revenge in the form of a "holy war." Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a leader within the Union of Islamic Courts, said, "Heavily armed Ethiopian troops have invaded Somalia... They have captured Bur Haqaba. History shows that Somalis always win when they are attacked from outside." For its part, Ethiopia denied that its forces had traversed the border into Somalia.

The tensions between the Islamists in Somalia and Ethiopia saw no reprieve in the following months. By December 2006, the Union of Islamic Courts issued a seven-day deadline to Ethiopia, warning that if Ethiopian troops were not withdrawn from Somalia, they would face imminent attack. Ethiopia responded by denying that its soldiers were fighting in Somalia, saying instead that hundreds of its forces were simply assisting the transitional government. In fact, Islamists and government forces -- apparently aided by Ethiopian troops -- were ensconced in fierce clashes in mid-December 2006. Ethiopia's head of government, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi dismissed the deadline and the possibility of attack, noting that such threats were nothing new.

On December 24, 2006, Ethiopia openly admitted that it was carrying out an offensive in Somalia. The government of Ethiopia acknowledged that its troops were battling militias from the Islamic Courts. Berhan Hailu, Ethiopia's Information Minister, said in an official statement that his country's military had been deployed into Somali territory for the purpose of "self-defensive measures." To this end, Hailu noted, "The Ethiopian government has taken self-defensive measures and started counter-attacking the aggressive extremist forces of the Islamic Courts and foreign terrorist groups." His remarks were regarded as a significant break from previous statements by Ethiopia, which mostly consisted of a variety of denials about its activities in Somalia.

Now, the reality on the ground in the border areas between Somalia and Ethiopia was characterized by heavy fighting. In addition to the fierce battles apparently taking place between the Islamists and the government forces, there were also reports of massive air strikes and shelling by Ethiopian fighters upon Islamist-held towns. In an interview with Agence France Presse, Sheikh Hassan Derrow of the Union of Islamic Courts reacted to these developments in saying, "The enemy of Allah has started bombing our civilians." He and his Islamist cohorts promised to push back the advancing Ethiopian troops.

Despite the Islamic Courts' calls to foreign fighters to join in the "holy war" in Somalia against Ethiopia, the situation on the ground was intensifying. Days later, the conflict was spreading past the border regions and deeper into Somali territory. There were conflicting reports about the number of people apparently killed in the fighting.

By December 28, 2006, Ethiopian forces had advanced deep into Somali territory and were now approaching the capital city of Mogadishu. With imminent attacks upon them, Islamist forces abandoned Mogadishu after holding control over the city for several months. Reports issued by the Associated Press indicated that some members of the Islamist militias were abandoning their duties and pledging their allegiance to elders in the city. There were also reports of gunfire throughout the city and looting of buildings that had been used by officials of the Union of Islamic Courts.

At the close of 2006, the transitional government of Somalia, aided by Ethiopian forces, had

control of Mogadishu. Islamist militias had fled the city, with many of their ranks heading toward the southern city of Kismayo -- one of their few remaining strongholds. Ethiopian troops were following the Islamists and moving toward Kismayo as well. Islamists then quickly retreated from Kismayo, even as thousands of civilians fled the port city amidst fears of violence. Such anxieties had been heightened when news spread that there had been violent clashes between Ethiopian troops and Islamists in the area of Jilib, to the north of Kismayo.

Developments in 2007

At the start of 2007, members of the Islamist militias were moving toward the border with Kenya. The transitional government of Somalia called on Kenya to close its borders. The Kenyan government responded by saying that it would convene a summit of East African countries to consider how to deal with the emerging crisis.

Even with the Islamists on the run and with the transitional government now retrieving some of its power, thanks to Ethiopian military support, the situation in Somalia promised to be challenging. The government was still faced with the prospect of reaching some sort of agreement with the Islamists, or risk continued destabilization in a country that had not seen peace and security for years. While the transitional government called for talks with the Union of Islamic Courts, the Islamists said that no dialogue was possible until Ethiopian forces exited Somalia. Indeed, the presence of foreign troops in Somalia was a matter of controversy among locals with divided loyalties. As a result, Ethiopia promised to depart quickly from Somalia.

In an interview with the British media in mid-January 2007, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia said that his country's forces were set to begin its withdrawal from Somalia. The Ethiopian leader said, "We want to withdraw at the earliest possible opportunity but we want to do it in a responsible manner."

For its part, the transitional government of Somalia was expected to concentrate on diplomacy in the first part of 2007. At issue was the matter of negotiations with the ousted Islamists and warlords. Such negotiations were aimed at bringing these disparate and rival factions into government, for the purpose of stabilizing the country and in the interests of long-term peace.

Meanwhile, the African Union (AU) was set to discuss a plan by which it would deploy a peacekeeping force to Somalia, which could eventually be replaced with United Nations peacekeepers at some point in the future. Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf had earlier called for a "speedy deployment" of peacekeepers to his country. While the United States offered to provide \$10 million in funds toward the creation of peacekeeping force that would operate under the aegis of the African Union, few countries initially pledged to send troops to Somalia. The European Union, however, joined the fray in the second week of January 2007, saying that it might send its own peacekeeping force to Somalia.

At an AU summit at the close of January 2007, Somalia's leadership agreed to host a reconciliation conference. Left to be seen was whether or not President Abdullah Yusuf would invite clan and religious leaders to the table for reconciliation. Such movement toward reconciliation would allow the European Union (EU) to release funding that could be used toward funding peacekeeping force in Somalia. External players, such as the EU, the United States and the United Nations, urged that moderate Islamists be included in the reconciliation process and ultimately, within a future government.

Also at the start of 2007, the United States (U.S.) carried out air strikes against Islamic extremists in the southern part of Somalia. It was the first military operation by the U.S. in Somalia since the 1990s when 18 American troops were killed in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

The U.S. tracked Islamists, believed to have links with the terrorist enclave, al-Qaida, via aerial reconnaissance. Once detected, strikes were launched from a U.S. gunship located at a military base in Djibouti. U.S. sources said that the Islamists in Somalia provided safe haven for the al-Qaida operatives responsible for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, which left more than 250 people dead. This very cadre of Islamist operatives was also believed to be responsible for the attacks on Israeli interests in 2002, which left 15 people dead. The Islamists, however, denied these claims.

On the ground in Somalia, reports suggested that certain areas, such Hayo, Afmadow and the island of Badnado, were particularly hit by the air strikes. Thousands of civilians found themselves at the center of the violence with air strikes raining down from above, Ethiopian tanks on the ground, and Kenyan soldiers guarding the border. In this regard, the transitional government of Somalia acknowledged that there were over 25 deaths as a result of the strikes.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military noted that an aircraft carrier had been deployed to the waters off the Somali coast to join three other warships, which were carrying out anti-terrorism operations.

In February 2007, the northern part of Mogadishu was hit by five mortar bombs, leading to the deaths of at least three people, and injuries to several others. It was the latest manifestation of violent attacks presumed to be carried out by ousted Islamist hard-liners.

In the last week of February 2007, Mogadishu's main airport, where the Ethiopian troops were based, came under mortar fire. With the country still plagued by unrest, the Somali government welcomed the news that the Nigerian army would deploy soldiers to Somalia as part of an AU peacekeeping force in mid-April when the Ethiopian forces were expected to leave.

In March 2007, an ambush on African Union (AU) peacekeepers in Somalia led to a gun battle, and the subsequent deaths of 10 civilians. The ambush occurred at a main intersection in

Mogadishu just as the first peacekeepers in more than a decade arrived in the violent Somali capital city. The Defense Department said that the attack would not deter the peacekeeping mission, and that an investigation into the matter would commence. In another incident, insurgents fired mortars at the airport during the welcoming ceremony for 800 AU troops from Uganda.

On March 23, 2007, it was reported that a cargo airplane transporting 11 engineers was shot down after taking off from the airport in Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. Observers on the ground said that the plane was shot down by a missile, however, that claim was not confirmed at the time of writing. The aircraft, with a crew of either Russians or Belarussians, apparently crashed into the northern suburbs of the city and was reported to have exploded in flames. It was not known if there were any survivors or if people on the ground were hurt. It was also unknown as to whether the situation was related to ongoing tensions between ethnic clans that dominate Mogadishu and the Ethiopian military. The Somali government issued a statement in which it warned that the apparent attack would not be accepted by either the authorities or the people.

Heavy fighting plagued the Somali capital of Mogadishu in late March 2007 between troops and Islamist rebels. The bloody conflict led to many civilian deaths, with some estimates noting that the death toll might be in the hundreds. In fact, the Red Cross noted that it was the worst spate of violence in Mogadishu in 15 years. Accordingly, hospitals were over-taxed as they attempted to deal with hundreds of casualties.

One African Union (AU) peacekeeper was among those killed the flare of violence. AU forces arrived in Somalia a month prior to replace outgoing Ethiopian troops, which entered the country in late 2006 to help the weak transitional government assert its authority over the ascendancy of Islamist rebels. While the Ethiopian troops managed to drive the Islamists from the country, in recent weeks, they appeared to be carrying out renewed attacks in Mogadishu. In response, the transitional government, backed by Ethiopian forces, said that it was launching an offensive against Islamist militias. That offensive had evolved into the ongoing bloody violence now plaguing Mogadishu.

April 2007 saw Somalia hit by a wave of rampant violence. On April 20, 2007, reports suggested that clashes between Ethiopian-backed government troops and insurgents, made up of both Islamists and militants from the Hawiye clan, were so violent that approximately 130 people had been killed and over 200 had been injured. Days later, the violence was ongoing. By April 22, 2007, reports noted that scores more people had died and that hospitals were being taxed by the casualty lists. One day later on April 23, 2007, Mogadishu was the site of heavy shelling as Ethiopian-backed government forces continued their fight with insurgents. Many people were now trapped in their homes, unable to leave for fear of being hit by shelling. Still more deaths were recorded on that day, taking the death toll to more than 250. Reporters said that corpses littered the streets of the capital.

But Mogadishu was only one site of the violence. Kismayo in the south saw fighting between rival clans, with the Marehan taking control, to the detriment of government forces.

Meanwhile, people were being displaced as they fled the bloodshed and violence plaguing Mogadishu. In recent months, up to 320,000 people fled the capital to escape the devolving situation with many headed toward the border with Kenya. As noted above, still others were trapped in their homes, unable to leave for fear of being hit by shelling. The medical situation was quickly deteriorating as the number of casualties increased. Aid workers and agencies warned of a looming humanitarian crisis as a result.

On April 24, 2007, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an immediate end to the fighting, as well as the convening of talks between opposed factions.

Early June 2007 saw a bomb attack carried out against Somalia's prime minister. A suicide bomber drove a vehicle packed with explosives into the home of Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Ghedi in Mogadishu. Several people died and 10 people were injured as a result. The prime minister, however, was unhurt. It was at least the third attempt of his life by would-be assassins since 2005 when he returned to Somalia. Prime Minister Ghedi accused Islamic militants linked with the terrorist enclave of al-Qaida of trying to destabilize Somalia. To this end, he said, "The terrorists wanted to discourage the government and Somali nation, but they will never succeed."

In June 2007, hundreds of people rushed into a police station in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu demanding food, which was expected to be distributed by a local organizer. The Somali security forces responded to the crowd by opening fire and killing at least five people. Somalia, which has generally regarded as one of the world's most well-known "failed states," has also been wracked by violence and concomitant humanitarian crisis for several years. The ongoing food shortages have been particularly difficult for the Somali people to deal with, and have been exacerbated by the fact that neighboring countries, such as Kenya, have sometimes shut their borders, thus making it difficult for food aid and humanitarian assistance to be transported into the country.

Meanwhile, violence was ongoing elsewhere in the country. In a market in Bakara, a grenade was thrown as a police patrol. Police responded in that case as well by opening fire. One woman waiting for a bus was killed as a result.

The interim government blamed ousted Islamists and renegade gunmen from the dominant Hawiye clan for the situation and imposed a curfew intended to curb the violence. However, many Somalis responded by accusing the government of allowing security forces to carry out indiscriminate violence against them. Overall, the landscape in Somalia continued to be characterized by lawlessness, instability and strife, despite efforts to move the country toward peace.

By July 2007, the Somali capital of Mogadishu continued to be plagued by violence despite anticipated peace and reconciliation talks set for July 15, 2007. Indeed, the capital was being hit by an upsurge in violence, as exemplified by daily bombings, heavy shelling and shooting attacks in areas frequented by civilians. In one case, two people died when a mortar bomb hit their house; in another case, shootings were reported at the main market at Bakara. The Ethiopian troops, who backed the fragile interim government and ousted the Union of Islamic Courts, as well as the government itself, were also being particularly targeted.

The general state of chaos spurred grave doubts about the success of the upcoming peace and reconciliation summit. The situation was not helped by the fact that several key figures, including leading Islamists and tribesmen, refused to participate. Nevertheless, in anticipation of that event, President Abdullahi Yusuf met with delegates from the African Union, Kenya, the European Union, and various European countries, who were informed about security plans for the summit. The delegates also met with elders from the Hawiye clan, however, there was no indication about whether or not clan representatives would attend the talks. As well, there was no confirmation about attendance by the Islamic Courts, despite the expressed view by Westerners and political experts that the reconciliation conference would be relatively useless without that group's participation.

On August 18, 2007, a clan elder was killed just outside his home in the Somali capital of Mogadishu by three gunmen. Known as a leader within the dominant Hawiye clan of Somalia, Maalim Harun Maalim Yusuf had played a central role at a reconciliation meeting that ensued a month earlier.

The incident was something of a shock to Somalis who, despite their familiarity with lawlessness throughout the years, have not seen many incidences involving direct assassinations of clan elders. Indeed, such tribal figures have typically been beneficiaries of an unspoken code of reverence. Speaking about the killing, Haji Abdi Iman, a senior representative for the clan, said: "I don't care who committed this heinous crime but I can say this is a black day for the supporters of peace because he a dedicated negotiator despite his old age." Violence erupted in the Horuwa district of Mogadishu following the shooting, with insurgents firing mortars at security forces.

Apart from the immediate effect on the streets of Mogadishu, the apparent assassination of Maalim Harun Maalim Yusuf was expected to have a negative impact on the anticipated peace summit, discussed above.

In mid-October 2007, two Ethiopian soldiers died as a result of a car bomb in the Somali town of Baidoa, which has often functioned as the seat of government in a country plagued by violence and lawlessness. Reports on the ground suggested that the actual target was an Ethiopian military post located close to the hotel where Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Ghedi was staying. As such, there was speculation that the bombing was motivated by factions opposed to the Ethiopian-supported

interim government of Prime Minister Ghedi. To that end, there was claim of responsibility from an Islamist insurgent commander that was broadcast on a radio station in Mogadishu. In that broadcast, the Islamist leader said that the attack was an attempted assassination. Soon thereafter, authorities raided the radio station, arrested journalists and the station manager, and ordered the radio station be shut down.

In the background of these developments was a meeting between Prime Minister Ghedi and President Abdullahi Yusuf, which was expected to be tense. The two men -- the head of government and head of state respectively -- disagreed on whether or not the current term of government should end in October 2007 or two years later. While the president favored an imminent end to the government on constitutional grounds, noting that it was formed three years prior, the prime minister has said that the charter legalizing the mandate was signed only one year ago and this would end in 2009. Meanwhile, parliament was set to table a motion on the matter.

On October 29, 2007, Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi resigned from office. Gedi's resignation appeared to have stemmed from his failure to stop the resurgent Islamic militias from carrying out an insurgency against the already-fragile interim government. As well, he was faulted for his plan to augment the weak Somali government by involving Ethiopian troops. It was a move that appeared to incite the Islamic militias even further. Gedi resigned following a meeting with President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed.

In the background of these developments was the ongoing tension between Prime Minister Gedi and President Abdullahi Yusuf, as noted above. With Gedi resigning from office, it was apparent that the president had gained the upper hand.

Gedi was succeeded by Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein in November 2007, and was generally regarded as more of a neutral figure than Gedi, who had close ties to Ethiopian authorities and refused to negotiate with opposition groups, including the Islamists. Hussein was a member of the largest clan in Somalia -- the Hawiye -- and his background included a career as a policeman and a stint as the head of the Somali Red Crescent organization.

A week after Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi resigned from office amidst charges that he failed to stop the Islamic insurgency, the Somali capital of Mogadishu was embroiled in heavy fighting between Ethiopian troops (in Somalia to back the fragile government) and Islamic militants. Several Ethiopian soldiers and even more civilians were reported to have been killed in the violence, in which Islamic militants were using guerilla tactics to carry out their attacks. However, the Islamic militants were not the only forces involved in fighting with Ethiopian troops. There were also reports of local Mogadishu residents opening fire on Ethiopian forces, suggesting that the presence of foreign forces in Somalia was taking a toll.

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Meanwhile, the violence was having a real effect on the ground as several thousand residents were displaced from their homes as they tried to escape the barrage of bullets. As well, the fighting prevented the transportation of goods, ultimately resulting in the depletion of fresh food supplies in the city. As such, aid agencies warned of a looming humanitarian crisis. The United Nations warned that 1.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance of some kind. By the second week of November 2007, tens of thousands of residents of the Somali capital of Mogadishu were fleeing the violence, which left scores of people dead in the space of only a week.

In December 2007, Prime Minister Hussein said that he was dissolving the cabinet, and appointing new ministers -- some of whom would not come from within the transitional parliament. Speaking from the seat of the transitional parliament, Baidoa, Hussein explained that the international community wanted to see a government made up of a wider cross-section of representatives. While some observers applauded Hussein's desire to bring in new players to the political process, others said that a smaller cabinet whose membership would only partially draw upon parliament, would likely raise the ire of key clans in Somalia who typically expect to be part of the government.

Meanwhile, in other developments in December 2007, Gwen Le Gouil, a French journalist, was abducted in northern Somalia. Officials from Puntland said that a ransom had been demanded for his release and efforts were underway to free him. While semi-autonomous Puntland has been generally regarded as the least volatile part of Somalia, it has increasingly become the associated with abductions, hijackings and piracy.

Developments in 2008

In early May 2008, the United States issued a missile strike in Somalia that was reportedly aimed at al-Qaida aligned targets in that country. The deadly strike was reported to have, indeed, killed the leader of an Islamist extremist group that the United States said was linked to al-Qaida. Approximately 10 other individuals were also killed in the strike. Days later, more than 1,000 residents of the central Somali town of Dusamareb took to the streets to protest the United States' missile attack and to rail against the Bush administration. Many people said that they were afraid that further strikes might take place.

In the first week of July 2008, the head of the United Nations Development Program in Somalia was killed in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu. Osman Ali Ahmed was reportedly shot as he departed from a mosque after evening prayers in the southern Bulohube district; he subsequently died at a hospital in the area. His death was the most recent casualty in a spate of violent attacks by Islamists against key officials in Somalia. Only the day before, an explosion in Mogadishu left a Somali official, his wife, and several others dead. Days later, two men were shot in separate incidents in Mogadishu. Mohamed Mohamud Qeyre, the deputy director of a local aid organization linked with the German aid group, "Bread for the World," was killed in one case. In the second case, an employee of an aid group tied to the United Nation's World Food Programme was shot and seriously injured. In addition, an aid worker was killed in Galharei town in central Somalia and a driver for the World Food Programme was killed at a checkpoint in the same period.

In response, humanitarian aid agencies were considering withdrawing their workers from Somalia due to the devolving state of security in already-lawless and volatile Somalia. Meanwhile, there was no confirmation as to who was responsible for the attacks. There was speculation that some power brokers were unhappy that humanitarian agencies were providing aid to Islamic insurgents and, as such, might be to blame. But Islamic insurgents have in the past attacked Somalis working with foreign groups and, thusly, could also be considered possible suspects.

A roadside bombing in the Somali capital of Mogadishu left at least 20 people dead and close to 50 wounded in early August 2008. Most of those killed with women who were cleaning the streets. There was no claim of responsibility, however, roadside bombs have become something of a hallmark tactic of Islamic insurgents in their struggle against the Ethiopian-backed transitional government.

The latter part of October 2008 saw heavy fighting between Ethiopian-backed government troops and extremist Islamist insurgents in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu. At least 20 people were reported to have been killed in clashes, while dozens more were wounded. In a single case, five people died when a mortar hit their house. It was the most intense fighting in Mogadishu in several weeks.

Elsewhere in Somalia, a humanitarian aid worker from the United Nations World Food Programme was shot to death as he exited a mosque in the town of Merka. His death was the latest in a spate of assassinations in Somalia that appeared to specifically target aid workers.

November 2008 saw violent and unstable Somalia devolve further into a state of disrepute on the global stage when a girl was dragged into a stadium and stoned to death. Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow's family reported that she had been raped by three men to the Al Shabab Islamist militia resulting in her detention. There was no attempt to either identify or arrest the rapists. Instead, the girl was dragged to a stadium in the southern port town of Kismayo and was reported to have been screaming "Don't kill me!" At the stadium, she was buried to the neck in a hole as a truck

loaded with rocks arrived on the scene. Fifty men then stoned her repeatedly while about 1,000 witnesses watched in the audience. After ten minutes of continuous stoning, two nurses checked to see if she was dead. Upon determining that she was yet alive, the stoning recommenced until she was determined to be dead. In this way, Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was subject to death by stoning for the crime of being raped and then reporting her attack to the authorities.

In December 2008, Somali President Abdullahi Yusef removed Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein from office on the grounds that the head of government had failed to end the conflict between hostile factions, effectively leaving Somalia without a functioning government and as something of a failed state.

The move by the president came at a time when the United Nations was trying to broker peace talks with the Islamists militants. To that end, Hussein said that his removal from office was part of the president's plan to undermine the United Nations-sponsored peace negotiations. The prime minister's position was bolstered when African Union Commission leader, Jean Ping, condemned the president's decision to have Hussein removed from office.

Days later, the Somali parliament gave a vote of confidence to Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein, declaring his ouster by President Abdullahi Yusef to be illegal, and effectively reinstating him into office. For his part, the president said he would abide by the parliament's decision.

The power struggle between the president and prime minister did not fade quickly from the public purview. Indeed, the East African regional bloc, Inter-governmental Authority (IGA), said that it would impose sanctions on Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed for his autocratic move to remove Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein as the head of government. IGA made clear its support for Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein and expressed regret over the president's attempt to oust the head of government from office. In a written communiqué, IGA stated, "[IGA] regrets the attempts by President Abdullahi Yusuf to unconstitutionally appoint a new prime minister that Iga does not recognize, and decides to impose sanctions on him and his associates immediately."

Also on the table for discussion was the matter of peacekeeping troops in Somalia at a time when Ethiopian troops were soon expected to exit Somalia. Indeed, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said that his country had made the "irrevocable" decision to soon pull back its approximately 3,000 troops from Somalia.

Accordingly, there was an imminent need for some sort of stabilizing force in Somalia, given its status as a quasi-failed state with a paralyzed government, and a dismal security situation on the ground, with Islamic militants on the offensive. To that end, the African Union (AU) decided to convene a crisis meeting among its Peace and Security Council to discuss a future peacekeeping force in Somalia. African Union Commission leader, Jean Ping, noted that Nigeria, Burundi and Uganda had indicated some willingness to contribute limited troops to the Somali cause.

By the close of December 2008, as increasing blame was being placed on him for deepening the country's political crisis, Somali President Abdullahi Yusef Ahmed resigned from office. For his part, he placed the blame on the international community for not doing enough to bolster Somalia's transitional government in its fight against Islamist rebels. The outgoing head of state said in an address to parliament, "Most of the country was not in our hands and we had nothing to give our soldiers. The international community has also failed to help us."

Meanwhile, Parliamentary Speaker Adan Mohamed Nur called for unity in the face of the president's resignation. He also said, "I have received and accepted the resignation letter of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed. I congratulate the president for the bold step he has taken in respect of the transitional federal charter." According to law, with the president's resignation accepted, the country's parliamentary body had 30 days to elect a new president by secret ballot. In the interim, the Parliamentary Speaker was to serve as president.

Even as Somalia's embattled transitional government was involved in its own power struggle, the start of 2009 saw the government's nemesis -- Islamic militants -- dealing with their own battle for supremacy. Indeed, rival Islamist groups, who control most of southern Somalia, were ensconced in violent clashes around the town of Guriel. The violence left more than 30 people dead and scores more injured. The internal Islamist conflict appeared to have been motivated by the impending withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia. With a power vacuum at hand, various Islamist wings -- hardliners and local militias -- were in a power struggle of their own as they aimed for supremacy and influence. Notably, the Islamist group, al-Shabaab, has opposed a peace deal with the transitional government of Somalia. Al-Shabaab was in a fight to take control of areas, like Guriel, which were being vacated by outgoing Ethiopian troops.

Developments in 2009

On January 12, 2009, the Somali capital of Mogadishu was the site of violent clashes between Somali government troops and Islamic insurgents. There were reports of fatalities as the Islamists shelled the presidential palace where African Union peacekeepers were in talks with Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein. Government troops responded forcefully by firing mortars, which ultimately struck a marketplace and residential district.

According to Ethiopia's Information Ministry, as of late January 2009, about 3,000 Ethiopian troops completed their withdrawal from Somalia two years after crossing the border to help the embattled Somali government fight against Islamist insurgents. While Ethiopian troops appeared to have left Mogadishu, surrounding areas, and the southern part of the country, locals in the town of Baidoa --the seat of the transitional government -- said that Ethiopian troops remained there.

Meanwhile, despite the success of the Ethiopian troops in helping the Somali government repel the

Islamists in 2006, in the years since that time, the religious extremist militias have regained much strength and terrain. With fears rising that the exit of Ethiopian troops would lead to further instability in already strife-ridden Somalia, approximately 3,400 African Union peacekeepers were expected to operate in Somalia.

At the political level, the government and moderate Islamic groups were convening power-sharing talks in Djibouti, aimed at expanding parliament (from 275 seats to 550) for the purpose of including these moderate opposition forces. Also on the agenda for Somali lawmakers in neighboring Djibouti was the election of a new president. That matter would follow the decision to expand the size of the Somalia's Transitional Federal Parliament, in order to include former rebel opponents, such as members of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS).

On January 30, 2009, the newly-expanded Somali parliament elected their new head of state. With the ballots counted and after two rounds of voting, Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed was elected president.

A moderate Islamist who studied at universities in Sudan and Libya, Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed was the leader of the Union of the Islamic Courts (UIC). The UIC has been composed of clan-based Islamic Shari'a courts, which ruled large swaths of southern and central Somalia in the second half of 2006. This movement gained ascendancy at the time when warlords were accused of oppressing local residents, but was ousted when Ethiopian troops allied with the Somali government against Islamist forces. Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed soon fled to Kenya but it was his decision to split with a hard-line cleric, Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, that largely contributed to his recent political foray.

Indicating his moderate credentials, President Ahmed pledged good relations with neighbors, including Ethiopia, which helped oust him from power a few years earlier. He also pledged to end corruption and to be inclusive during the peace process.

The new president was sworn into office and immediately traveled to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia to take part in the 12th African Union's Heads of State Summit.

Two weeks after Somalia welcomed its new president and head of state, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a new prime minister was selected. The new head of government, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, was the son of former Somali President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke who served the country as leader in the 1960s but was assassinated only two years after coming to power. The younger Sharmarke served as Somali ambassador to the United States during the tenure of former Somali president Abdulahi Yusuf Ahmed and worked for the United Nations in Sudan's Darfur region. His nomination would have to be confirmed by a vote in the country's newly enlarged legislature.

Assuming that process transpires as expected, Shermarke was to form a National Unity Government, as stipulated in the power-sharing agreement between the transitional government and the Islamist opposition faction, whose leader (Ahmed) was recently elected as president.

In April 2009, Somali pirates hijacked the Maersk Alabama in the Indian Ocean. The vessel was destined to dock at Mombassa in Kenya and was carrying food aid destined for Somalia, Rwanda and Uganda.

The Somali pirates, armed with guns, moved into proximity of an American vessel, the Maersk Alabama, via a small boat. They used ropes and hooks to climb aboard the vessel and then began demonstrating their gunfire. While the crew was able to regain control of the vessel and eventually reach its destination, Captain Richard Phillips was taken hostage and placed on a small lifeboat under the control of the pirates. He made one unsuccessful attempt to escape by diving into the water but was pulled back aboard by his captors.

United States warships and a helicopter quickly moved from other locations in the region to the site of the incident, but there was no immediate attempt to rescue Captain Phillips. Negotiators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation were then deployed in an effort to secure the captain's release. Those hostage negotiations with the Somali pirates, however, soon devolved with no agreement being forged. Some reports suggested that the sticking point in the negotiations was the United States' insistence that the the pirates be arrested and brought to justice.

Meanwhile, the White House was tight-lipped about the situation until the dramatic rescue was complete. To that end, President Obama gave orders to use force to secure Captain Phillips' release. According to reports, United States snipers were perched on the navy warship; they opened fire, killing three of the pirates. The fourth pirate surrendered to the navy forces. With the pirates no longer a threat, navy personnel boarded the lifeboat and discovered Captain Phillips unharmed but bound by ropes.

United States authorities acknowledge that the dramatic rescue could well motivate the targeting of Western vessels in region. To date, such hijackings have been relatively bloodless and aimed at procuring hefty ransoms. But this strong response by the United States, coming on the heels of a similarly dramatic rescue by French military of four French citizens just days before, could well raise the proverbial stakes.

In May 2009, Somalia's capital of Mogadishu was the site of renewed bloodshed and violence. Government forces and Islamic militants from the extremists enclaves, al-Shabab and Hisbul-Islam, were embroiled in street combat for several consecutive days.

Somalia's President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed placed the blame for the renewed bloodshed and violence on radical Islamists and hard-liners who were not interested in reconciliation and were prepared to take control of the country by force. In an interview with the British Broadcasting

Corporation (BBC), Somalia's president said: "You see that the opposition is using the violence and killing and bloodshed, they don't want the violence in Somalia to end and the objective is to take the country by force." Indeed, the government's decision to accept Shari'a law in Somalia has done little to satisfy extremists Islamic militants. At the time of writing, at least 120 people were reported to have been killed.

By May 13, 2009, radical Islamists had advanced to the edge of the presidential palace in Mogadishu in the Wardigley district. Fighting was also reported to be taking place in the Bondere and Karan regions to the north of the city. Some of the government troops were said to have defected to the side of the militants, leaving remaining government troops and African Union forces confined to a narrow strip inside the capital city.

Days later, Somalia's President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed called on Islamist insurgents to negotiate a ceasefire as violence and fighting continued to plague the capital of Mogadishu. President Ahmed said in an interview with the BBC, "They see it lawful to shed blood. They aim to take over Somalia by force. We call on them to end the conflict by negotiating on our political differences." The president also said that tens of thousands of the city's residents were being displaced as a result of the chaos on the ground. To that end, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that up to 30,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in a mere one-week period.

These assertions found no resonance with Islamists who dismissed the overture. Islamist spiritual leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who was at one time aligned with the president, summarily rejected the call for talks leading to a truce. Sheikh Aweys deemed the interim government and parliament to be unacceptable to the Somali people; he also suggested that the presence of African Union troops in Mogadishu was a sticking point for the Islamic militants. Another Islamist leader, Omar Iman Abou Bakr, further explained that their efforts [the Islamists' fight] had been successful and the only remaining soldiers fighting on behalf of the government were under the protection of African Union forces, who had no mandate to pursue Islamist insurgents. Thus, from his perspective, there was no incentive to enter negotiations.

By the end of May 2009, a senior insurgent commander who recently defected from the pro-government Islamist faction, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), to the armed opposition Hezbul Islam (Islamic Party), led by Sheikh Aweys, was gunned down in the streets of Mogadishu. His death came at a time when Somali government forces and insurgent Islamist fighters were in a bloody battle for control of the Somali capital. Then at the start of June 2009, several Somali policemen were killed while driving in the south of Mogadishu as a result of a roadside bomb blast. The back to back incidences of violence made clear that both sides of the conflict were vying for domination.

Somalia's location on the north-eastern edge of Africa with the Gulf of Aden to the north separating it from the Arabian peninsula, and the vast and highly-trafficked Indian Ocean to the

east makes it a country of vital strategic interest on the global scene. Lawless Somalia, which is widely regarded as a failed state, has had no functioning government since 1991. Once controlled by warlords, Somalia is now under the governance of a weak Western-backed government, which has been forced at times to operate outside of the capital city. Should that fragile Western-backed interim government fall, Somalia could come under the control of Islamic extremists with ties to the terrorist group, al-Qaida. Such a scenario would present a clear threat to global security.

Indeed, African Union (AU) envoy Nicholas Bwakira has warned that members of al-Qaida numbering in the hundreds were among the Shabab Islamist group. Bwakira rejected the notion of AU forces withdrawing from Somalia on this basis saying, "It would be unacceptable that Shabab/al-Qaida take over government in Somalia. This is a group of war criminals." The United Nations envoy to Somalia, Ahmed Ould Abdallah, has not fully endorsed this course of action. He has advocated the removal of Somali Islamists, including Aweys, from terrorism "watch lists," in order to further negotiations and progress on the peace process.

As alarm over the situation in Somalia increased, neighboring countries urged the United Nations to impose a blockade on air strips and sea ports, in order to prevent the Islamists from procuring weapons and strengthening their fighting forces. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (Igad) also called on international vessels, which were charged with searching for pirates, to enforce the blockade. Igad also identified Eritrea as a possible target for blockade as well, charging that the country has aided Somalia Islamists in acquiring weapons and training insurgents.

In mid-June 2009, three Somali officials were assassinated within days of one another. In one case, politician Mohamed Hussein Addow was killed by gunmen in Mogadishu. The area Addow represented -- the Karen district of northern Mogadishu -- had been the site of fierce fighting between government forces and extremist Islamists for over a month. In a second case, a police commander was killed. The most high profile assassination occurred was that of National Security Minister Omar Hashi Aden. The cabinet minister was killed in a suicide car bomb attack as he was leaving the Medina Hotel in central Beledweyn. A number of other government officials were killed in the attack, including Abdelkarim Farah Laqanyo -- Somalia's former ambassador to Ethiopia. Also among the dead were 20 more people, most of whom were locals and community elders who were meeting the minister and the other government officials.

In an interview with the media, Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed characterized the attack as a foreign invasion of Somalia. He also publicly accused the radical Islamist group, al-Shabaab, of being behind the assassination of the minister who as a key member of the Somali government had been trying to mobilize government forces to fight the growing militant Islamic insurgency. The president's claim was not likely to become one of factual debate since the extremist movement, al-Shabaab, which has been linked with al-Qaida quickly claimed responsibility for the attack. Indeed, a spokesman for the group, Sheikh Ali Mohamoud Rage, said

an al-Shabaab fighter carried out a "martyrdom operation."

It should be noted that in that time period, both al-Shabaab and Hezbul Islam were carrying out attacks on Somali government forces and African Union peacekeepers in Mogadishu. In fact, the day before Security Minister Aden was being assassinated, close to fifty people had died and more than a hundred others were wounded as fierce battles ensued between Islamic militants and joint Somali government and African Union forces. Then, on the very day of Security Minister Aden's assassination, at least 10 people died and 20 others injured by a mortar bomb blast at a mosque in Mogadishu. It was not known at the time of writing who was responsible for firing the mortar, but it occurred as Islamic militants were fighting joint Somali government and African Union forces. Further deaths occurred as shelling by government forces hit some people in the Bakara market of Mogadishu.

Commenting on the situation unfolding in Somalia, an official from the United Nations warned that Mogadishu was experiencing the worst violence and bloodshed in close to two decades of conflict and chaos. But whereas neighboring Ethiopia had been willing to help quell the violence and aid the government forces in repelling the Islamists in the past, it was no longer so willing to enter the fray. Indeed, Ethiopia made clear that it would not provide Somalia with military support in the fight against extremist Islamist insurgents, explaining that any military intervention would require some sort of international mandate.

In mid-July 2009, two French hostages who were seized in Mogadishu were said to be held in captivity by Islamic militants from the al-Shabaab movement. The two French nationals, who had been working as security advisors to the government of President Sheikh Sharif, were taken hostage when gunmen stormed a hotel in Mogadishu. Reports suggested that their capture had been facilitated by a faction of the government's security team who were sympathetic to the Islamist insurgents.

In late July 2009, Islamist militants from Somalia's al Shabaab enclave reportedly looted two United Nations compounds in Baidoa and Wajid. These actions occurred after al-Shabaab, which has been linked to al-Qaida, warned that it would shut down three United Nations agencies operating in the Horn of Africa. The Islamist militants accused the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) of being against Somali Muslims and working in opposition to al-Shabaad's agenda of establishing an Islamic state. The hardline Islamist insurgent enclave has held sway over most of southern Somalia and parts of the capital Mogadishu in recent times. For its part, the United Nations said that its expatriate staff in Baidoa would be evacuated to neighboring Kenya, but that operations in Wajid would continue as usual. As well, the United Nations' top humanitarian official, John Holmes, promised that humanitarian aid workers would not abandon Somalia even in the face of such threats and in the aftermath of the looting.

United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held talks with Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, during an African tour in August 2009. The United States' chief diplomat said that her country was interested in a stable Somalia. She also blamed Eritrea for backing Islamist rebels, known as al-Shabab, which has the expressed objective of overthrowing the government of Somalia. To these ends, Secretary of State Clinton said: "Certainly if al-Shabab were to obtain a haven in Somalia which could then attract al-Qaida and other terrorist actions, it would be a threat to the United States." She continued, "It is long past time for Eritrea to cease and desist its support of al-Shabab and to start being a productive rather than a destabilizing neighbor. Accordingly, Secretary of State Clinton warned that the United States would take action against Eritrea if it did not cease its support for the extremist Islamist militants in Somalia. She said: "We are making it very clear that their actions are unacceptable. We intend to take action if they do not cease."

Of course, such action would not include the deployment of United States forces to Somalia to fight the militant insurgents there. However, Agence France Presse reported that the United States would double its supply of arms and ammunition to Somalia. In this way, the United States was effectively admitting that it has supplied pro-government forces in Somalia with weaponry in recent times.

On the other side of the equation, Eritrea has denied supporting Somalia's al-Shabab militants, and characterized the United States' accusations as a "fabrication."

Nevertheless, there was evidence that several Somali militant Islamist groups carried out their operations from inside Eritrean territory after they were driven by joint government and Ethiopian troops from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006. The history of animosity between Ethiopia and Eritrea indicates that the two countries may have been carrying out a proxy war on Somali territory. While Ethiopia has been reluctant to re-enter the fray as of 2009, Clinton's accusations suggest that the United States believes Eritrea to be playing a continuing role in the chaos that has bedeviled Somalia.

Later in August 2009, the government of Somalia called on militant Islamist insurgents to join with them in participating in a ceasefire during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The militants Islamists adamantly rejected the government's call for a Ramadan ceasefire and said that President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was using religion to obfuscate his own military strategy. Specifically, they accused the president of trying to secure time and opportunity to re-arm his own troops. Meanwhile, the country was embroiled in some of the bloodiest fighting seen in Mogadishu in several months with thousands of people being forced to flee their homes. But in a rare show of good news in Somalia, one of the two French security advisers who were abducted by insurgents a month prior managed to kill three of his captors and make an escape.

Fighting in Mogadishu during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan was reported to be the worst in

20 years. In the first week of September 2009, more than 30 civilians died, according to a human rights group in the Somali capital. The Elman Peace and Human Rights Organization said that 18 women and seven children were among the dead and 82 civilians were injured in that narrow period of time. The group said that the victims were caught in the crossfire of violence between African Union peacekeepers and extremist Islamist insurgents. Somalia has become a strategic flashpoint due to its status as a failed state in the Horn of Africa -- fertile terrain for terrorist groups, such as al-Qaida, to operate with impunity.

Later in September 2009, United States special forces killed one of east Africa's most wanted al-Qaida militants in southern Somalia. Kenyan-born Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan was suspected of a number of terror-related crimes, such as building a truck bomb that killed 15 people at a Kenyan hotel in 2002, as well as involvement in a botched missile launch targeting an Israeli airliner leaving Mombasa's airport. Members of a Somali militia opposed to the Islamist insurgent enclave, al-Shabaab, lauded the operation and called for more strikes against foreign jihadists. On the other side of the equation, Islamist extremists claimed responsibility for a double suicide attack on peacekeepers in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, which killed at least 16 people. Among the dead was the deputy commander of the African Union force operating in Somalia. Reports suggested that the suicide bombers used vehicles with United Nations logos to enter the peacekeeping base, where the explosives-laden vehicles were then detonated. Al-Shabaab said that attacks were in retaliation for the aforementioned killing of Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan.

On Oct. 22, 2009, more than 30 people died and 70 were injured in Mogadishu during shelling between Islamic militants and troops from the African Union Mission. Most of the casualties were noted at the Bakara market. Reports from the ground indicated that the shelling began close to the international airport of Aden Adde -- an African Union troop base -- after joint government and African Union troops blocked a major highway in Mogadishu. The move was made in order to protect Somali President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, who was headed to the airport to travel to Uganda to attend the African Summit. The incident was later identified as an attempted assassination attempt on the president. Less than a week later, another attack on the president was attempted as he returned to Mogadishu.

The leading United Nations envoy for Somalia condemned those responsible for the assassination attempts on the life of President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. United Nations Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, excoriated extremist Islamists for terrorizing the Somali people. He condemned them for resorting to political assassinations and the killing of innocent civilians -- including women and children -- in a bid to gain power, and warned that such a path was anti-Islamic.

On Dec. 3, 2009, a terror attack on a hotel in the Somali capital of Mogadishu left at least 50 people dead including nine students, a lecturer, several government ministers and a number of journalists. Scores of civilians and government officials were injured as well. The attack occurred

during a graduation ceremony for the Banadir University at the Shamo Hotel in southern Mogadishu. Somali officials confirmed that Higher Education Minister Ibrahim Hassan Adow, Health Minister Qamar Aden Ali, and lecturer, Mohamed Aden Shahiid, were among the victims. Meanwhile, the Shabelle Media Network confirmed that one of its reporters, Mohamed Amin Aden Abdulle, had been killed along with an al-Arabiya television photographer, Hassan Zubeyr Haji.

The international community reacted with furor at the terror attack, manifest most ostensibly by the strong condemnation by the United Nations Security Council. A presidential statement from that body read as follows: "We condemn in the strongest terms the killing of innocent civilians and three Somali government ministers." The statement also read, "This was a criminal attack on people dedicated to building a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for the people of Somalia." The United Nations Security Council also called for a "thorough investigation" into the act of terrorism, demanded that opposition groups lay down their arms and end renounce violence, and also convened a special meeting to mull over possible actions to be taken in response. For his part, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued his own condemnation and noted that such attacks would only augment the determination of the Somali transitional government and the people of Somalia to fight terrorism in the interests of security.

Recent Developments

The start of 2010 was marked by further violence in Somalia. At least 50 people were killed and more than 100 were injured during clashes between pro-government forces and militant Islamists in the central Somali town of Dhuusa Marreeb. While pro-government forces were reported to have retaken control over the town, the al-Shabab Islamist extremists nonetheless held control of the town for a few hours. The power struggle, as noted here, left a lengthy casualty list. That said, one of the central featured of this particular clash was the fact that it ensued between al-Shabab and the pro-government Ahlu Sunna group, which was initially formed as a non-violent moderate Islamic faction but which in 2009 decided to take up arms against al-Shabab.

In the second week of February 2010, fighting wracked Somalia's capital of Mogadishu as government forces backed by African Union (AU) peacekeepers against militant Islamist rebels. Scores of casualties were reported and hundreds of people attempted to flee the crossfire of violence. The fighting occurred after militant Islamist fighters launched mortar rounds at government and AU forces based in Mogadishu, prompting a volley of heavy shelling. The clash was being regarded as a harbinger of imminent confrontation between the two sides as the al-Shabaab group -- long believed to be aligned with the notorious terror base al-Qaida -- moved into Mogadishu with an apparent objective to reinforce its positions ahead of an expected offensive by government forces. While the Somali authorities have denied that such an offensive operation against militant Islamist insurgents was in the works, the general consensus was that such action

was in the offing.

On March 10, 2010, violent clashes between Somali government forces and militant Islamist al-Shabaab rebels in the north of Mogadishu left close to 20 people dead and scores more wounded. In a separate incident, two employees of a telecommunications company were reported to have been beheaded by al-Shabaab militants. The two victims were accused by al-Qaida, which is allied with al-Shabaab, of spying on behalf of the government. For its part, the aforementioned government's claim that it would carry out an offensive operation against the militant Islamist rebels was yet to be realized despite an increase in attacks and violence.

Meanwhile, a report by the United Nations refugee agency noted that since the start of the year, increasing violence in Somalia has resulted in the displacement of more than 100,000 Somalis.

On May 23, 2010, extremists Islamist Al-Shabab militants attacked Somalia's presidential palace in Mogadishu. The militants fired mortars at the palace, prompting government forces backed by African Union (AU) peacekeepers to return fire, effectively spurring violent clashes that led to the deaths of several people. A spokesman for the AU peacekeeping mission, Major Barigye Ba-hoku, explained the decision to engage the extremist Islamic militants with ties to the notorious terrorist enclave, al-Qaida, saying, "People need to understand what our mandate is - we are here to protect the transitional federal institutions of Somalia and we also have red lines." For his part, President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was out of the country in Turkey -- ironically attending a peace conference -- and was thusly not affected by the attack. In Turkey, United Nation Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was calling on donors to show support for President Ahmed and the fragile interim government of Somalia.

On July 11, 2010, scores of people died in double explosions in the Ugandan capital of Kampala. Local Ugandans as well as foreigners were among the victims. Ugandan police said the bombs exploded at a rugby club and at a restaurant as football fans watched the final match of the World Cup. In an interview with Agence France Press, Inspector General of Police Kal Kayihura said, "These bombs were definitely targeting World Cup crowds."

While there was no conclusive information about those behind the attacks, Police Chief Kaihura expressed the view that Somalia's extremist Islamic militia — al-Shabab, which has been linked with al-Qaida -- may have been to blame. Indeed, the feared Somali militants certainly made threats against Kampala, perhaps because of the fact that Ugandan troops were deployed in Mogadishu. Only days earlier, al-Shabab commander, Sheik Muktar Robow, demanded that militants attack venues in Uganda and Burundi since both countries have contributed troops to the African Union force in Mogadishu. Meanwhile, another al-Shabab commander, Sheik Yusuf Sheik Issa, refused to confirm or deny his group's role in the Kampala twin bombings but expressed happiness that they occurred at all. During an interview with the Associated Press, he said, "Uganda is one of our enemies. Whatever makes them cry, makes us happy. May Allah's anger be

upon those who are against us."

With all available indications suggesting that Somali-based al-Shabab was responsible for the attacks, the group itself removed doubt by claiming responsibility for what appeared to be its first terror attack outside Somalia's borders. For its part, the Obama administration in the United States pledged help to track down those responsible. At the same time, the United States Department of States made it clear that it was focused on al-Shabab as a threatening entity with global jihadist aspirations. As well, it pointed to Executive Order 13536, signed by United States President Barack Obama, which was intended to block the finances of militant extremist Islamists in Somalia deemed to be a threat to the peace process in that country.

On Aug. 23, 2010, extremist Islamic militants from the al-Qaida allied group, al-Shabab, carried out an offensive at a hotel located close to the presidential palace in Mogadishu. The gunmen, who were disguised as soldiers, stormed the Muna hotel, opened fire, and at least one detonated the explosives attached to his body. More than 30 people died as a result of the brutal attack, including six members of parliament. The Muna hotel was popular with government officials due to its location in a government-controlled area; a successful attack on this target would therefore be regarded as a success for the extremist Islamic terrorists trying to take control over Somalia, which is already regarded as one of the world's failed states.

But al-Shabab's ambitions are not limited only to Somalia, given its successful execution of two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010. In the cases of those twin bombings, al-Shabab claimed that it was seeking revenge for Uganda's participation in African Union peacekeeping operations in chaos-ridden Somalia. Clearly, these recent attacks indicate an increasingly jihadist orientation of the terror enclave, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. For its part, al-Shabab claimed responsibility, noting that its "special forces" unit had carried out the massacre, which came a day after heavy fighting broke out on Somalia between al-Shabab and government troops.

On September 9, 2010, an attack on Mogadishu's airport by suicide bombers left two African Union (AU) peacekeepers and several civilians dead. Blame was quickly cast on militant extremist Islamist rebels, known as al-Shabab, who have been linked with the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida. Since August 2010, militants from al-Shabab have been vowing to intensify their efforts to crush Somalia's Western-backed administration. Indeed, as noted above, they carried out an audacious attack on a Mogadishu hotel, targeting members of parliament in August 2010. Earlier, they even executed deadly bombings outside their own borders in Uganda, with the objective in the case being revenge on that country for contributing peacekeepers to the AU mission in Somalia. For its part, the interim government condemned the militants for their actions. In a statement, the government asserted: "Al Shabab has ignored the president's plea to allow the people of Mogadishu to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan in peace. They offer nothing but terror, intimidation and the defiling of our culture."

By mid-September 2010, al-Shabab was making good on its promise to intensify its offensive against Somalia's fragile Western-backed government. The extremist Islamists had fired mortar rounds into Somalia's government complex on Thursday, leaving three soldiers dead and wounding at least one member of parliament and several more soldiers. The assault spurred a counter-attack by joint government and African Union troops, ultimately killing more than a dozen and wounding 40 more -- all of whom were caught in the crossfire of the violence. The attack occurred while parliament was in session, aiming to pass a motion ahead of a vote of confidence.

It should be noted that conflict was breaking out between factions of the government with legislators accusing the country's transitional government of failing to foster peace between the country's warring factions. Indeed, the situation seemed emblematic of the ongoing feud between Somali President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke. The latest flare-up appeared to have been spurred by disagreement over the country's draft constitution. While the president wanted the document ratified by referendum, the prime minister preferred to have the document passed by parliament and civil society representatives.

The political struggle reached its nadir on September 21, 2010 when Somalia's prime minister resigned from office, noting that he was "unable to work with the president." Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke said he was stepping down in the national interest, according to BBC News. Explaining his rationale, Sharmarke said, "After seeing that the political turmoil between me and the president has caused security vulnerability, I have decided to resign to save the nation and give a chance to others."

The political turmoil erupted at a time when the already-grim security situation in Somalia was on a precipitous and disturbing downward slide. Government-backed forces remained embroiled in a violent struggle with the extremist Islamist enclave al-Shabab for control over the capital city of Mogadishu. Already, the al-Qaida aligned militants held control over large swaths of southern and central Somalia. Analysts suggested that the dissonance between the president and prime minister was exploited by al-Shabab militants. Thus, the resignation by Prime Minister Sharmarke could be a blow to al-Shabab, if the factions of the transitional government opted for unity in the face of the threat by militants.

That being said, there was no immediate effect on the security situation in the immediate aftermath of the prime minister's resignation. Indeed, September 23, 2010 saw violent clashes between pro-government troops and al-Shabab militants ensue across the capital city of Mogadishu. The extremist Islamists indiscriminately lobbed rocket-propelled grenades across Mogadishu and opened fire using machine guns, ultimately leaving around two dozen people dead and injuring scores more. Most of the casualties -- including women and children -- occurred in the area of the Bakara marketplace. Pro-government forces composed of soldiers and African Union peacekeepers attempted to repel the militants, who declared they were now in a "new war" against the fragile transitional government of Somalia. Al-Shabab explained the objective of this "new war" as follows: "To eliminate the invading Christians and their apostate government."

By October 7, 2010, African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces were reported to be making progress in their fight against al-Shabab militants in Mogadishu. In fact, the AU envoy to Somalia, Wafula Wamunyinyi, said in an interview with the BBC that AU forces were now in control of about 40 percent of Mogadishu. Wamunyinyi said that AU forces had taken control of several new positions in the capital city. Previously, government-allied forces held sway only over select portions of Mogadishu, such as the presidential palace, airport and harbor. Now, apparently, government-allied forces were able to cut off al-Shabab from the busy Bakara marketplace. Some of this success was attributed to growing schisms within the broader base of Islamist militants.

Around the same time, the AU was reportedly calling for increased funding aimed at increasing its presence in Somalia. AU forces charged with backing the fragile transitional government of Somalia amounted to 6,000 in mid-2010; the regional bloc was aiming to increase its foothold in Somalia to around 20,000 troops. Given the attack on Uganda by al-Shabab, in retaliation for Ugandan troops operating under the aegis of the AU in Somalia, it was unlikely that many African countries would give positive responses to this request.

Returning to the political realm, on September 24, 2010, Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed named Abdiwahid Elmi Gonjeh to be the country's interim prime minister. Abdiwahid Elmi Gonjeh had served as deputy prime minister and cabinet minister in the government of now-resigned Prime Minister Sharmarkeh. Then, on October 14, 2010, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed named Mohamed Abdulahi Mohamed as the new -- and permanent -- prime minister. Mohamed -- a political novice who spent much of his life in the United States -- was expected to quickly form a new government of national unity. He was sworn into office on November 1, 2010 and after the inauguration ceremony vowed to uphold the laws of the land, form a government of national unity, and work diligently on the country's security, economic, and political problems.

On February 21, 2011, a suicide car bomb left at least ten people dead and more than 25 people injured at a police training camp in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu. Most of the victims appeared to be police officers. The militant extremist Islamist group, al-Shabab, wasted no time in claiming responsibility for the attack. Al-Shabab, which already held sway over most of southern Somalia, has been in a bitter and brutal fight with the forces of the interim government for full control over Mogadishu. For its part, Somalia's fragile transitional government, which has control over only parts of Mogadishu, condemned the attack. In other developments, the African Union peacekeeping mission announced that it would soon launch fresh military operations in Mogadishu, with the objective of improving the security situation there.

On June 10, 2011, Somali Interior Minister Abdi Shakur Sheikh Hassan was killed in a suicide attack at his home in the capital of Mogadishu. The suicide bomber was identified by Somali officials as the cabinet minister's own niece who reportedly joined the militant Islamic group, al-Shabab, which has terror ties to al-Qaida. Because the young woman -- a relative -- had been to

visit the cabinet minister before, she was not subject to security checks and was able to enter the home and immediately detonate the explosives strapped to her body. Al-Shabab confirmed it was behind the killing and promised further attacks would follow. Indeed, in the weeks leading up to Hassan's killing, there had been a number of suicide attacks in Mogadishu. That being said, over all, al-Shabab has been reported to have lost territory in recent months as Somali troops, backed by African Union soldiers, have managed to push back the militant Islamist movement.

The scenario unfolded even as an agreement was signed in Uganda to postpone elections in the country. Initially scheduled to be held before August 2011, now -- according to the Kampala Accord -- the elections for president and speaker would be held on Aug. 20, 2012. There was no mention in the Kampala Accord of parliamentary elections. In the interim, the current cabinet under Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi would be dissolved and a new government would be formed. The extension of President Sharif's power did not find positive resonance among some quarters, with politicians and the public railing against the news and characterizing the move as unconstitutional. Protests took hold in Somalia as a result, with a number of deaths reported.

Clearly, by the middle of 2011, Somalia continued to be plagued by violence as a result of the conflict between the fragile government and Islamists from al-Shabab, which was aligned with the terror enclave, al-Qaida. It should be noted, though, that the country was also dealing with political challenges.

The death of a Somali cabinet minister at the hands of his niece -- an al-Shabab adherent -- unfolded even as an agreement was signed in Uganda to postpone elections in the country. Initially scheduled to be held before August 2011, now -- according to the Kampala Accord -- the elections for president and speaker would be held on Aug. 20, 2012. There was no mention in the Kampala Accord of parliamentary elections. In the interim, the current cabinet under Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi would be dissolved and a new government would be formed. The extension of President Sharif's power did not find positive resonance among some quarters, with politicians and the public railing against the news and characterizing the move as unconstitutional. Protests took hold in Somalia as a result, with a number of deaths reported.

By the third week of June 2011, Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi -- also known as Farmajo -- resigned from his post in the wake of an agreement forged between the president and the parliament to force him from office. For his part, Farmajo resisted calls for his resignation and appeared to have the support of some swaths of the Somali public; however, with limited ability to shift the situation politically in his favor, he announced that he was stepping down. The outgoing head of government said, "Considering the interest of the Somali people and the current situation in Somalia, I have decided to leave my office. I would like to thank my cabinet who have done a lot to help improve security and standards of governance in Somalia." The exit of Mohamed Abdullahi was part of a United Nations-backed agreement that would extend the mandates of

President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, Parliamentary Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, and members of parliament, to August 2012.

The new acting prime minister was named as Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, who had worked in the capacity of Minister of Planning and International Cooperation. A technocrat with multiple graduate degrees from some of the best universities in the United States, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali would be charged with trying to revive Somalia's war-ravaged economy and lead the effort to improve national security.

In August 2011, as Somalia grappled with a crippling famine and drought crisis, the Islamist militant group, al-Shabab, withdrew from the capital city of Mogadishu. Al-Shabab -- which is allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- has been carrying out a violent insurgency for several years and won control over significant swaths of the country's territory. However, military gains have been simultaneous with an increasing food and drought crisis that has gripped the country. Indeed, the hard line tactics of al-Shabab included preventions on access to humanitarian aid for people most affected by the lack of access to food and water. It should be noted that even with its exit from Mogadishu, al-Shabab yet controlled southern and central Somalia -- the two areas hardest-hit by the famine and drought.

African Union peacekeepers in Somalia, tasked with trying to maintain some semblance of security in a failed state beset by lawlessness, have called for thousands more troops to be deployed to this country. Major General Fred Mugisha of the African Union said that even with the official exit of al-Shabab, there were remnants of the extremist group still in the city. Indeed, after announcing a withdrawal, al-Shabab launched double attacks on Mogadishu. Major General Mugisha warned that there remained a grave threat to stability in Mogadishu and there was a particular need to protect valuable and much-needed food aid. He added that al-Shabab could well turn to guerrilla warfare in Mogadishu, including carrying out suicide bombings.

Earlier, in 2010, the United Nations Security Council approved peacekeeping forces from the African Union to be deployed to Somalia numbering 12,000. The African Union has argued that it needed up to 20,000 troops. Now in 2011, the United Nations special envoy to Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, appeared to give sanction to this position, noting that he backed the notion of more African Union troops in Somalia.

On Aug. 23, 2011 at a rally attended by thousands of Somalis who were celebrating the withdrawal of al-Shabab fighters, Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali praised the Somali people for their support of the country's national army and African Union soldiers, who together have fought al-Shabab. He said, "I am pleased to participate in your celebrations of the liberation of our city from the forces of terror, fear, violence and darkness." The prime minister also promised that the government would be committed to increase security and restore some of the social services that were devastated during the war over the years.

Note: On the issue of the famine and drought, Aug. 8, 2011, saw the arrival in Mogadishu of the first humanitarian airlift from the United Nations refugee agency in five years. The food and drought crisis has affected not only Somalia but other countries in the Horn of Africa including Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Uganda.

On Oct. 4, 2011, a massive suicide truck bombing in the Somali capital city of Mogadishu left more than 80 people dead and more than 50 others injured, while destroying a building that housed eight government ministries. According to eyewitness accounts, a truck laden with explosives drove up to a checkpoint gate at the government compound before being detonated. No government officials were hurt, with most of the victims being soldiers guarding the premises and students who were waiting outside the government's Ministry of Education for results of their examinations.

Without delay, the Islamist militant group, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for the attack, which was the first significant act of violence since al-Shabab initially withdrew its forces from Mogadishu in August 2011. Weeks prior, al-Shabab carried out a failed attempt to seize two towns along the border with Kenya from pro-government forces. That being said, this October 2011 attack on the government compound in Mogadishu was a case of a successful act of terrorism by al-Shabab. Indeed, the attack made it clear that the exit of al-Shabab from the capital did not mean an end to the violence and chaos plaguing the failed nation state of Somalia. To that end, the United Nations-backed transitional government condemned the attack while noting, "The attack shows that the danger from terrorists is not yet over and that there are obviously still people who want to derail the advances that the Somali people have made towards peace."

In the latter part of October 2011, in the aftermath of a terror attack in the Somali capital, African Union (AU) forces were claiming that they had driven al-Shabab out of Mogadishu. Major General Fred Mugisha of the AU said in an interview with the BBC: "[Transitional Federal Government of Somalia] forces, supported by Amisom (the African Union Mission in Somalia) -- we have managed to push out al-Shabab from Mogadishu main city. As I am talking to you, we control the whole of Mogadishu main city, yes." Of course, even if this claim proved to be sustainable, al-Shabab militants still retained presence in the outlying district of Daynile and held sway over large swathes of south and central Somalia. Ironically, in August 2011, Major General Fred Mugisha of the African Union at the helm of peacekeeping forces operating in Somalia, had warned that al-Shabab could well turn to guerrilla warfare in Mogadishu, including the use of suicide bombings. Clearly, with a terror attack hitting Mogadishu, that dire warning was now coming to pass.

By the start of November 2011, a top envoy for the United Nations to Somalia asserted that AU troops, indeed, had control over Mogadishu. United Nations Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, said that soldiers for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) had taken charge over Mogadishu as the Islamist terror militia

changed tactics and moved to unconventional guerrilla warfare. Mahiga said, "Two months after al-Shabaab withdrew from Mogadishu and turned into a guerrilla outfit, our control of the city sprang from 45 percent to total command, with only a small corner remaining that we will soon overrun."

Mahiga, speaking at a news conference in the Kenyan capital in Nairobi, also said that the United Nations fully supported a recent Kenyan incursion into southern Somalia (discussed below), which was aimed at pursuing the terror enclave. Indeed, only weeks prior, suspicion was cast on Somalia's al-Shabab in relation to a nightclub grenade attack in Kenyan capital. Mahiga made point of noting that while the United Nations backed Kenya's action, there were no plans for a convergence of forces in fighting the common threat posed by al-Shabab. That said, the AMISOM troops would be re-oriented to deal with the al-Qaida proxy group's unconventional warfare tactics. Mahiga also made mention of the civilian victims -- about 100 in total -- who had died from the new scourge of suicide attacks.

On Dec. 6, 2011, a suicide car bomb killed at least five people, including a Somali policeman and the suicide bomber, in Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. According to reports on the ground, the bomb exploded just as the car was being searched by police at a busy junction in Mogadishu. In fact, the driver admitted to carrying explosives in his vehicle, and chose to detonate them as police were investigating the matter. With the extremist Islamist militant group al-Shabab's history of launching suicide bombings in Mogadishu, all suspicion in this case rested on the group, which is allied with the terror enclave, al-Qaida. This attack made clear that although al-Shabab made a "tactical withdrawal" from Mogadishu -- while continuing to hold sway in the southern and central parts of the country -- it was clearly still capable of staging attacks in the Somali capital.

Foreign Forces Target Al-Shabab

In the autumn of 2011, Kenyan military forces along with allied Somali troops launched an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida. The action was in reaction to the violence and terrorism carried out by militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state.

The assault went on for weeks, included air strikes by Kenyan forces, and yielded a number of deaths. The air assault was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds and a number of apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants. Kenya argued that its action was necessary and that al-Shabab's actions made al-Shabab-controlled areas "legitimate targets." Hundreds of civilians in the conflict zone were fleeing the area to escape the aerial bombardment.

At the start of November 2011, Kenya and Somalia found concurrence on a joint war strategy targeting al-Shabab. The leaders of the two countries -- Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga and Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali agreed on a war strategy to coordinate their assaults on al-Shabab strongholds of Somalia.

Earlier, there had been some rumblings from the Somalian leadership that Kenya should not have sent troops into its territory to fight al-Shabab, prompting all parties to seek clarification. Now making it clear that the plan was a joint effort and that the Somalian government endorsed Kenya's involvement, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali said in an interview with the media: "There is no discord within the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) leadership. The President of Somalia is aware that I am here to discuss the security operation with the Kenyan government." He continued, "It is necessary for us to have a common strategy against the al-Shabab." For his part, Raila Odinga explained that Kenya was compelled to take action against al-Shabab, saying, "This was a reaction to a situation that was becoming intolerable." He added, "Nobody knows how long and where it was going to end. We want to see a stable civilian authority in Somalia, we want to help Somalia to stabilize."

Raila Odinga and Abdiweli Mohamed Ali urged the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to deploy troops in towns that had been taken over by Kenyan troops. Somali and Kenyan officials had apparently agreed that Somali forces would take charge in the operation. The two leaders also advocated the development of local administrations and infrastructure in newly liberated towns -- presumably to offer fresh opportunities to beleaguered people living in those undeveloped areas, which traditionally are ripe for terrorist recruitment. Furthermore, they called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to immediately investigate the al-Shabab for war crimes. In fact, they said that the TFG of Somalia would immediately seek assistance from the ICC in this effort, with the objective being international indictments for al-Shabab fighters alleged to be war criminals.

On Nov. 19, 2011, reports emerged about convoys of vehicles carrying Ethiopian troops across the border into Somalia. Eyewitness accounts confirmed the presence of Ethiopian soldiers in various Somali towns. It should be noted that Ethiopian soldiers had operated in Somalia, with the purpose of backing the fragile government of Somalia against the militant Islamist group, al-Shabab, for about three years, before finally withdrawing in 2009.

For their part, Ethiopian authorities denied that their forces were involved in any incursion into Somalia in November 2011, maintaining that their soldiers have not been in Somalia in significant numbers since 2009. Of course, the characterization "in significant numbers" lent some confusion to the situation. That confusion was not helped by the statement made by a Somali member of parliament that the presence of Ethiopian troops was necessary in the fight against al-Shabab.

In the background of the news that Ethiopian troops might be in Somalia was the fact that Kenyan

troops were now in Somalia to fight against the threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, since October 2011, Kenyan military forces along with allied Somali troops have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida. The action was in reaction to the violence and terrorism carried out by militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state. Now though, Kenya had joined forces with Somalia to go after al-Shabab. Indeed, by the start of December 2011, Kenya was saying that as many as 40 al-Shabab militants had been killed in a battle in the southern town of Hawo.

At the close of 2011, it was reported that Ethiopian forces had captured the central Somali town of Beledweyne from al-Shabab Islamist militants. Eyewitnesses on the ground observed that both armored vehicles and heavy artillery were used in the assault on al-Shabab militants in Beledweyne. A lengthy battle between about 3,000 Ethiopian troops and al-Shabab fighters followed, ultimately ending in the withdrawal of the Islamic militants from the strategically-located town along the road to Somalia's capital of Mogadishu.

Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali confirmed the news of Beledweyne's capture, saying, "Early this morning, the Somali National Army recaptured some al-Shabab-occupied territories engaging the enemies in Hiiraan and other regions of the country." He said that the operation was aimed at liberating the country from "the tyranny of al-Shabab." Meanwhile, Ethiopian authorities confirmed the involvement of its country's troops, saying that the assault was carried out at the behest of the Somali government. This confirmation reinforced reports a month earlier that convoys of vehicles carrying Ethiopian troops had moved across the border into Somalia.

It should be noted that Ethiopian soldiers had operated in Somalia, with the purpose of backing the fragile government of Somalia against the militant Islamist group, al-Shabab, for about three years, before finally withdrawing in 2009. Now, at the start of 2012, it was apparent that there was the resumption of some military engagement by Ethiopian troops in Somalia once again, with an eye on repelling al-Shabab.

As the year 2012 began, Ethiopian and Kenyan troops continued to operate in Somalia. The forces from Ethiopia and Kenya were carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida.

In the first week of January 2012, the Kenyan army announced that it had eliminated 60 Somali al-Shabab militia fighters in air strikes in Garbaharey in southern Somalia's Gedo region. Kenyan authorities also said that their forces were and determined to "break their [al-Shabab's] spine

completely." Despite a number of defections from al-Shabab fighters, the power base of the Islamist extremist movement said that it would repel the Kenyan troops.

As January 2012 entered its final week, African Union (AU) forces launched a major offensive against al-Shabab Islamists in Somalia. The operation targeted the Somali capital of Mogadishu and aimed to seize territory from al-Shabab. To that end, about one thousand AU troops were able to capture three al-Shabab bases and were advancing on Mogadishu. Pro-government forces were reported to have taken control of both Mogadishu University and Barakat cemetery, as AU forces advanced northward following a period of heavy fighting. Nevertheless, on Jan. 19, 2012, a suicide attack at a refugee camp in the capital left several people dead, including a security guard and a local aid worker.

On Feb. 18, 2012, Kenya's military said that it made further advances in an effort to quell al-Shabab. Specifically, Kenya's Defense Forces said that it liberated a total of 95,000 square kilometers of Southern Somalia from the al-Shabab. Accordingly, its operation could well be described as something of a success.

Since the autumn of 2011, as discussed here, Kenyan military forces, along with allied Somali troops, have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia. The action was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds, apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants; the action was motivated by the regime of violence being carried out by the militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. .

It should be noted that although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from the Somali capital of Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area.

That being said, al-Shabab has been under intensifying pressure from a number of fronts. In addition to the troops from Kenya, there have also been African Union troops operating in Somalia to offer support to government forces, as well as troops from Ethiopia and most recently Djibouti additionally working in Somalia towards the same goal of repelling al-Shabab. Of course, the presence of foreign troops in Somalia could prove to be a controversial matter, even contributing to further instability in a country that can only be classified as a failed state. Indeed, al-Shabab declared that the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia was to be regarded as an act of war. Moreover, as of February 2012, as discussed below, al-Shabab went from operating as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida, to officially joined the ranks of al-Shabab.

Special Entry: Al-Shabab Officially Joins Jihadist Terror Network

On Feb. 10, 2012, al-Shabab of Somalia -- the extremist Islamist militant group -- officially joined

the terror enclave al-Qaida. The two groups posted a joint video formalizing the merger on the Internet.

In that video, al-Shabab's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane (also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair) promised that his group's militants would be "faithful soldiers" for al Qaida. He said, "In the name of my mujahedeen brothers, leaders and soldiers...I pledge obedience." He continued, "Lead us on the road of jihad and martyrdom, in the footsteps that our martyr Osama bin Laden had drawn for us." The al-Shabab leader was followed in the video by Ayman Al Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaida, announced the "good news" of al-Shabab's decision to join the global Jihadist movement -- a move he said would undoubtedly "annoy the crusaders."

It should be noted that although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area. In fact, al-Shabab has been functioning as a de facto ally of al-Qaida, in recent years. Indeed, al-Shabab has acted as something of a proxy for al-Qaida, even expanding its terrorist activities beyond Somali borders as it moved in a Jihadist direction. Notably, al-Shabab was responsible for deadly bombings in Uganda, and it was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state. This announcement of al-Shabab joining al-Qaida, therefore, merely officialized al-Shabab's identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa, now subsumed under the al-Qaida rubric.

That being said, al-Shabab has been under pressure since late 2011 and into 2012 as a result of strategic offensives by Somali troops backed by African Union forces, as well as incursions by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops, aimed at quelling the effects of al-Shabab in the strategic Horn of Africa. See above for details as regards the efforts of foreign forces in Somalia and the fight to quell al-Shabab.

Further 2012 Update:

At the start of March 2012, authorities in Somalia were projecting a more positive image of the country, claiming that its victories against the militant extremist enclave, al-Shabab, were helping pave the way for a more stable future. Dismissing the recent report that al-Shabab officially joined the notorious terrorist group, al-Qaida, Somali officials instead pointed to the fact that African Union-backed government troops were beating back their attempts to reclaim a foothold in the capital city of Mogadishu. As well, the presence of foreign troops from Ethiopia and Kenya "in country" - also placing pressure on al-Shabab -- was paying security dividends. The interim government announced the country had applied to join the East African Community, that beaches were open for recreation, and that an international air carrier -- Turkish Airlines -- announced

regular flights into Mogadishu. Moreover, President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, who has typically been confined to his official residence at Villa Somalia for security reasons, was seen strolling in the streets of the capital.

But by mid-March 2012, such claims by Somali authorities were being challenged by the reality of ongoing attacks by al-Shabab -- even on high value targets. Indeed, on March 14, 2012, a suicide bomber killed at least five people in an attack at the compound of parliamentary speaker, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan. Al-Shabab wasted no time in claiming the attack, which it described as an extraordinary operation. In other developments in Somalia, as many as 5,000 people were being displaced as a result of clashes between al-Shabab terrorists and Somali troops assisted by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops in the country's southwestern Gedo region.

On April 4, 2012, a bomb attack in the Somali capital of Mogadishu left several people dead, including Aden Yabarow Wiish, the head of the country's Olympic committee and Said Mohamed Nur, Somalia's football chief. Three Somali television journalists sustained injuries in the blast, which took place at the newly re-opened national theater. That theater had been closed in the 1990s when Somalia was in the throes of civil war; it was re-opened in March 2012 as the government boasted of a new day dawning in Somalia. Clearly, Somalia was far from the promise of calm. Militants from the Islamist terrorist enclave, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for the attack. Al-Shabab released a statement via Twitter that read as follows: "The Mujahideen successfully planted the explosives before the gathering." As well, a spokesman for the group, Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, said in an interview with Reuters, "We were behind the theater blast. We targeted the infidel ministers and legislators, and they were the casualties of today." Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, who was among the survivors of the attack, condemned al-Shabab, noting that it was the mission of the terrorist group to "kill innocent people."

Timetable for Political Transition

On May 24, 2012, leaders of various factions in Somalia agreed to a timetable for a political transition in the country, ultimately culminating with a presidential election by Aug. 20, 2012. Also ensconced in the transition agreement were provisions for a draft constitution and a new federal parliament that would be appointed by a group of elders by July 20, 2012 - ahead of the presidential election. To that end, the members of the new federal parliament would be responsible for choosing the president in an internal election a month later in August 2012.

The agreement was forged in Ethiopia and signed by six parties -- interim President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, his prime minister, the parliamentary speaker, as well as the regional leaders of Galmudug, Puntland and a representative of the pro-government militia al-Sunna Wal Jama'a. The al-Shabab Islamists aligned with the terror enclave a-Qaida, who have controlled swaths of central Somalia, were not party to the agreement. Also outside the agreement was the self-declared

independent state of Somaliland, which broke away at the start of the civil war in 1991. It should be noted that there was a sense of urgency in crafting the deal with donors warning that they would withdraw funding if the country's political crisis did not soon come to an end.

At the start of August 2012, two suicide bombers carried out an attack at the gates of Somalia's constituent assembly. The bombing left both men dead but no civilian casualties since they were stopped at the gates and shot. No one group claimed responsibility for the attack, although all eyes were on the militant Islamic group, al-Shabab, that has aligned its forces with the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida. This incident came after a spate of other such acts of violence in a short space of time as roadside bombs and grenade attacks rocked the Somali capital city of Mogadishu. Observers believed that the attacks were all designed to undermine the historic gathering of the constitutional assembly.

That constitutional assembly was aimed at establishing a foundation for a future government, and ultimately stabilizing Somalia, which is arguably one of the world's failed states. A vote on a draft constitution was expected to be held on the day of the very day of the bombing at the gates of the constituent assembly complex. By the close of the first week of August 2012, Somali President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed had signed a national security plan intended to address long-term issues for security and to reform the country's justice sector in light of the threat posed by the aforementioned al-Shabab.

Elections Note:

On Aug. 20, 2012, Somalia's newly-selected members of parliament were sworn into office -- a development intended to demonstrate the country's desire to transition from a failed state into more stable governance. The new parliament would be tasked with electing a new president of the country in a parliamentary vote.

A presidential election was set for August 2012 as part of the stabilization agenda for Somalia. Already on the agenda was a new draft constitution, which would set the path for the establishment of a new government. These development sought to catapult Somalia out of its current status as one of the world's failed states.

Three top political leaders in Somalia indicated they would be contesting the presidency; these three individuals included the incumbent president, the prime minister, and the speaker of the outgoing parliament. Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was a moderate Islamist who has held presidential power since 2009; he was seeking re-election and has been viewed as a front runner in this 2012 contest. Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, a senior academic who has gained notoriety as a technocrat, was looking to elevate his political fortune and consolidate the political gains made in recent times. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adam, the speaker of the outgoing

parliament and a businessman, was advancing his candidacy on the basis that he was the face of political change in Somalia. More than a dozen other candidates would also be contesting the presidency.

Note: The vote on the presidency took place on Sept. 10, 2012 via secret ballot. Late on that day, it was announced that Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud was the country's new president with 190 votes. The incumbent president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed made it into the final round but ended up in second place. For his part, Hassan Sheikh Hohamoud thanked the members of parliament for their votes, expressed gratitude to the international community for assisting Somalia, and cast the election as a historic development.

On Oct. 6, 2012, the newly-elected president of Somalia named a new prime minister. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud announced that Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid, a political neophyte, had been selected as the country's new head of government. Shirdon Saaid was a successful entrepreneur in Somalia's neighboring country of Kenya who was married to a well-known Somali peace activist, Asha Haji. It should be noted that a presidential election was held a month prior, on Sept. 10, 2012, as part of the stabilization agenda for Somalia. Already on the agenda was a new draft constitution, which would set the path for the establishment of a new government. Now, in October 2012, the country had a new president, who had chosen a new prime minister to lead the government. The selection of Shirdon Saaid, who was quite clearly outside the cauldron of volatile and contentious clan politics in Somalia, was being interpreted as a wise choice by observers. Indeed, as the first major presidential decision, it was expected to bolster the standing of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. These developments sought to catapult Somalia out of its current status as one of the world's failed states.

Other Recent Developments

On Sept. 29, 2012, following an assault by African Union troops, Islamist extremists in Somalia withdrew from their southern stronghold of Kismayo. The assault was carried out by Kenyan and Somali forces, functioning under the aegis of the African Union, in a mission to flush out the Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabab, from one of their remaining strongholds. The operation began with early morning airborne and amphibious landings in the coastal area close to the road to Mogadishu. The ensuing battle was a fierce one with the African Union troops encountering serious resistance from the al-Shabab fighters, although they were eventually able to force the Islamists to retreat. Al-Shabab released a statement eschewing the notion of surrender and claiming that their abandonment of Kismayo was simply a "tactical retreat."

Nevertheless, two days later on Oct. 1, 2012, the African Union forces, along with Somali government troops, finally entered the strategic port of Kismayo. This effort against al-Shabab, an ally of al-Qaida, was aimed at clearing the political field and taking control over the country at a

time when Somalia's United Nations-backed President Hassan Sheikh Hohamoud was coming to power.

On April 14, 2013, around 20 people were killed when gunmen dressed in military garb stormed a courthouse compound in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, and launched an attack. The gunmen opened fire and a gun battle followed between the attackers and security forces. Among the dead were several armed intruders carrying out the attack, including some who detonated the explosives strapped to their bodies. In a separate incident, a car bomb exploded on the road to the airport, killing the suicide bomber and two Turkish aid workers.

The Somali-based Islamist terror group, al-Shabab, which is allied with the al-Qaida terror base, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The violence was the worst in Somalia since al-Shabab was driven from Mogadishu by African Union and government forces in 2011. Since that time, the capital has endured occasional attacks in the ensuing two years as al-Shabab tried to regain a foothold in the capital. Still, Mogadishu could claim some degree of uneasy calm, which was certainly ruptured on this day in April 2013. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud responded to the attacks with condemnation saying, "Somalia is moving and will keep moving forward and will not be prevented [from achieving] a peaceful and stable Somalia by a few desperate terrorists." Despite the president's dismissal that the attacks were "nothing but a sign of desperation by the terrorists," the fact remained that al-Shabab continued to hold sway over large swaths of rural Somalia.

On Aug. 4, 2013, al-Shabaab Islamist terrorists launched an attack on the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Despite the fact that Somalia's government-controlled capital has seen security improvements in recent times, al-Shabab Islamist extremists were nonetheless able to carry out a guerilla-style attack using mortar shells and grenades, leaving women and a policeman wounded. Somali security forces displayed their prowess by returning fire and the attack was quelled with a low number of casualties. Still, al-Shabab promised that further attacks were in the offing to mark the end of the Ramadan holy Muslim period.

In the second half of 2013, violence sparked in Somalia at the hands of extremist Islamists, thus reminding the world of the country's "failed state" status. Of particular note was the fact that the spate of attacks targeted foreign nationals, journalists, and politicians. It was clear that Islamist extremists remained intent on the goal of destabilizing Somalia. Indeed, the alarming increase in violence resulted in the decision by Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) to close its operations in Somalia due to "extreme attacks on its staff."

On Aug. 21, 2013, a Swedish politician was attacked in Mogadishu -- the capital city of Somalia. Gunmen fired at the vehicle transporting Ann-Margarethe Livh, wounding the Swedish politician, and killing two others. The incident occurred as Livh -- the leader of Sweden's Left Party in Stockholm -- and the two other victims, a Somali translator and a police officer -- were returning

to her hotel following her delivery of a lecture on democracy at a university in Mogadishu. The shocking act of violence against a prominent foreign national was expected to add to the fears that Somalia was slipping back into a failed state marked by lawlessness and chaos, and with Mogadishu regaining its dubious distinction as a battleground between weak government forces and Islamic extremist militants.

These fears were only accentuated on Sept. 7, 2013, when the Somali Islamist militant group, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for the bombing of a popular Mogadishu restaurant close to the presidential palace that left 15 people dead. Witnesses on the scene said the attacks included both a car bombing and a suicide bomber. Spokespersons for al-Shabab, which is aligned with the terror enclave, al-Qaida, said it had expressly targeted the restaurant because it was frequented by Somali members of parliament, government employees, and journalists. Nicholas Kay, the United Nations secretary-general's special envoy to Somalia, reacted to the bloodshed as follows: "I am appalled by this act of savagery and condemn it in the strongest terms. I offer my sincere condolences to the families and friends of those killed and wish a speedy recovery to the injured."

Al-Shabab terrorists from Somalia launch brutal attack at Kenyan shopping mall

Gunmen from the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab, launched an audacious attack on a popular shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi on Sept. 21, 2013. The attack began with the al-Shaba extremist Islamist terrorists storming the upscale Westgate mall compound, hurling grenades, and opening fire on customers and mall staff with automatic weapons.

Two days later on Sept. 23, 2013, the attack continued with around 70 people reported to have been killed, more than 175 wounded, as many as 50 people unaccounted for. Also, scores of people were believed to be held either as hostages or trapped in the mall and unable to escape. Meanwhile, a standoff was ensuing between the terrorists and Kenyan security forces.

There were unconfirmed reports that the attackers included at least one woman. At the same time, according to witness accounts, the attackers were clearly targeting non-Muslims. Survivor accounts indicated that the terrorists asked Muslims to identify themselves and they were then allowed to leave. According to a witness account recorded by a correspondent for the Economist, an Indian man who claimed to be Muslim (presumably for reasons of survival) was shot to death when he could not provide the correct answer to a question regarding the Islamic Prophet Muhammed's mother.

Also among the dead were Kenyan, Ghanaian, South African, French, Dutch, British, Canadian, American, Peruvian, Australian, Indian, and Chinese victims. The Ghanaian victim was reported to be the well-known poet, Kofi Awoonor, who was in Kenya to attend a literary festival. Of the Canadian victims, one of the dead was reported to be a diplomat. The wife of an American

working for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was also reported to have been killed. Because the mall was the venue for a gathering of children on that day, children were reported to have died in the attack which British Prime Minister David Cameron characterized as "an act of appalling brutality."

In a televised address, President Uhuru Kenyatta said that security forces were "in the process of neutralizing the attackers and securing the mall," however, it was apparent that despite the president's claim, that goal was not going to be accomplished with ease. Indeed, the safety of the hostages required that security experts use caution and delicacy to end the siege. Still, the Kenyan leader had a warning for the al-Shabab terrorists, saying, "We shall hunt down the perpetrators wherever they run to. We shall get to them and we shall punish them for this heinous crime." President Kenyatta certainly had a personal stake in the matter as he confirmed that his own family members had been killed in the attack.

There were efforts afoot to deal with the ensuing siege at the shopping mall, with Kenyan special forces being called in to support police in this effort. As well, Israeli deployed some of its anti-terrorism experts to help Kenyan authorities while the international police organization, Interpol, had offered to deploy an Incident Response Team consisting of specialized forensic officers, anti-terror experts, to Kenya. Further forensic experts were being sent to assist the Kenyans from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada to examine DNA, fingerprints, and ballistic evidence.

Al-Shabab, which aligned itself with the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida, wasted no time in claiming responsibility for the deadly attack, explaining that its actions were in retaliation for the Kenyan's military involvement in Somalia.

Since the autumn of 2011, Kenyan military forces, along with allied Somali troops, have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab. The action was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds, apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants; the action was motivated by the regime of violence being carried out by the militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, in response to Kenya's involvement in Somalia, under the aegis of the African Union mission. That mission was itself aimed at stabilizing Somalia.

Although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from the Somali capital of Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area. The terrorist agenda of al-Shabab was extroverted in 2012 when the extremist Islamist entity went from operating as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida, to officially joining the ranks of the world's most notorious terror enclave.

Al-Shabab has been under intensifying pressure from a number of fronts. In addition to the troops from Kenya, there have also been African Union troops operating in Somalia to offer support to government forces, as well as troops from Ethiopia and most recently Djibouti additionally working in Somalia towards the same goal of repelling al-Shabab. The presence of foreign troops in Somalia could prove to be a controversial matter, even contributing to further instability in a country that can only be classified as a failed state. Indeed, al-Shabab declared that the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia was to be regarded as an act of war -- with the September 2013 assault on the Nairobi shopping mall being the latest apparent battle in the war.

Note that as of Sept. 24, 2013 -- three days after the start of the tragic assault -- Kenyan authorities were able to report that they were in control of all areas of the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. But that claim was regarded with doubt as explosions and gunfire continued to be heard emanating from the shopping complex, and as flames were seen coming from the mall. Kenyan Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku said that Kenyan special forces were carrying out an operation intended to end the siege, saying, "The terrorists could be running and hiding in some stores, but all floors now are under our control." He continued, "There is no room for escape."

A day later on Sept. 25, 2013, President Kenyatta announced that the crisis was over and promised again that the assailants would be brought to justice. To that end, about a dozen suspects were said to be arrested on the grounds that they were somehow involved in the attack. Seven people were arrested at the airport in Nairobi and being subject to interrogations. It should be noted that Kenyan authorities confirmed that a woman was among the al-Shabab assailants; she was reported to be a national of the United Kingdom. Also among the assailants were two United States nationals, who were described to be of about 19 years old and of either Arab or Somali origin. The International Criminal Court entered the fray saying that it would work with Kenya to ensure the terrorists responsible for the bloodshed and violence would face justice.

In the waning days of September 2013, a number of suspects being held in connection with the terror attack at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. As well, there were reports that both Kenyan and Western authorities were trying to apprehend a United Kingdom national -- Samantha Lewthwaite -- known as the "white widow" due to the fact that she was the wife of one of the 2005 London suicide bombers. It was not known if Lewthwaite was being sought in connection with the Kenyan mall attack or in connection to a previous al-Shabab plot dating back to 2011.

Around the same time, there were reports that Kenyan government ministers received warnings of an impending terror attack ahead of the Westgate shopping mall massacre. Kenyan newspapers reported that the National Intelligence Service was warned of the presence of suspected al-Shabab militants in Nairobi more than a year prior, and that those militants were planning to carry out acts of terrorism. In fact, Kenya's Daily Nation reported that ministers were given security briefings "informing them of increasing threat of terrorism and of plans to launch simultaneous attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa around September 13 and 20, 2013." The Daily Nation also noted that

Kenyan intelligence had actually pinpointed both the Westgate shopping mall and the Holy Family Basilica as likely targets.

With this news emerging and accusations arising about the government's lack of attentiveness to such precise threats, the Kenyan government was clearly under fire. On Sept. 29, 2013, Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku was asked to address these concerns during a news conference; however, he declined to comment, saying instead that intelligence issues were confidential.

As September 2013 drew to a close, the terror group, al-Shabab warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. But there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Indeed, there were reports of Kenyan forces gathering close to the Somali border, in anticipation of a peacekeeping rotation into Somalia. As well, President Uhuru Kenyatta has made it clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). This attack in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab.

More Violence by al-Shabab Islamist Terrorists

On Nov. 8, 2013, at least six people were killed and more than a dozen others were injured as a result of a suicide attack at a hotel in Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. The attack came in the form of a car bombing outside the Hotel Maka, which was known to be a popular meeting spot for government officials and members of parliament. There were reports that one victim was a senior diplomat. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, the likely culprit was al-Shabab -- the Somalia-based terror group allied with the Jihadist terror enclave, al-Qaida.

It should be noted that the Hotel Maka was located on a road that connects the airport with the presidential palace in the capital city. Since this part of Mogadishu was heavily guarded, it has also been regarded as relatively safe. A suicide attack in this part of the city, likely attributable to the terror group al-Shabab, was therefore expected to raise anxieties in Somalia. While al-Shabab has been active in the rural part of the country, it was largely driven out of Mogadishu. A terror attack in the part of the city generally viewed as safe -- and with government officials as the likely target -- would constitute cause for concern, especially since al-Shabab appeared to be stepping up its campaign of terror elsewhere in the country and regionally.

Earlier, in the third week of October 2013, a suicide bomber carried out an attack on a cafe in the Somali town of Baladweyne, killing close to 20 people and injuring more than 30 others. The attack took place close to the border with Ethiopia. Since the cafe was a venue patronized by

both local and foreign soldiers fighting al-Shabab terrorists, there was little doubt as to the motivation behind the attack.

Al-Shabab wasted little time in claiming responsibility for that attack, and made clear that it actively targeted soldiers participating in the African Union peacekeeping force fighting against Islamic extremists in that country. Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, a spokesperson for al-Shabab, said: "Our main target was Ethiopian and Djibouti troops who invaded our country." He also claimed the death toll was higher -- with 25 victims.

A month later on Nov. 19, 2013, at least 19 people died as a result of a suicide attack on an African Union (AU) base in the same town of Beledweyne close to the border with Ethiopia. Officials said the suicide bomber drove a car packed with explosives through the gates to the base while gunmen then stormed the building, which houses AU troops from Djibouti as well as Somali policemen. The Somali-based Islamist terror group, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for this attack in Beledweyne as well. It was evident that Beledweyne's strategic location close to the Ethiopian border but also on the main road to Mogadishu was a factor in al-Shabab's decision to targeting the town in its campaign of terror and violence.

It should be noted that joint Somali and African forces drove al-Shabab from Baladweyne more than a year prior to 2013. However, as its control over vast swaths of territory has eroded, al-Shabab has moved away from direct confrontation -- or war -- with military forces and moved towards guerrilla-style attacks typical of terrorist entities.

Al-Shabab has also clearly moved away from a Somalia-only target zone, and having aligned itself with al-Qaida, was now clearly embracing its Islamic Jihadist orientation. Of note was the series of attacks launched by al-Shabab in neighboring countries, such as Kenya and Uganda, which have dispatched troops to Somalia to help the government troops stave off the Islamist threat. Over the course of recent years, al-Shabab has carried out terrorist attacks in Kenya, but none was so shocking or brutal as the siege on a Nairobi shopping mall in September 2013, and the resulting rampage of terror that left scores of people dead (discussed above).

According to United States intelligence, Uganda was also on al-Shabab's target list as it warned that country to take necessary cautions to save itself from a Kenyan mall-style attack. This warning appeared to be justified as al-Shabab soon warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia.

Special Note on U.S. special forces operation in Somalia

In October 2013, United States special forces raided terrorist enclaves in Somalia. This operation targeted the Somali town of Barawe. There, commandos were targeting a "high value" terrorist

from al-Shabab -- the Somali terror group that is allied with al-Qaida. Because al-Shabab fighters responded with heavy fire, United States commandos chose to retreat from the scene although there was some suggestion that one al-Shabab terrorist was killed. It was not known if the person killed was Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, also known as Ahmed Godane -- the leader of al-Shabab. It was later revealed that the target of that action was Abdukadir Mohamed Abdukadir, a Kenyan al-Shabab commander also known by the name "Ikrima." It should be noted that the al-Shabab, which is aligned with the terror enclave al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, discussed above.

Somali parliament ousts prime minister

A no-confidence vote in the parliament of Somalia ended the tenure of Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon who had been in office for little more than a year. Indeed, he was the fifth prime minister in six years to be ousted by the Somali parliament. At issue in this case was disagreement between members of parliament and Shirdon over the selection of members of a new cabinet. The development was sure to add further instability to the failed nation state of Somalia. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamad was expected to eventually appoint a new prime minister. Note that as of December 2013, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed became the new head of government.

Islamist terrorist al-Shabab group likely culprits in attacks

At the start of January 2014, Somalia was rocked by violence as a dual car bombing of a Somali hotel left about a dozen people dead and more than 40 others injured. The site of the two bombings -- the Jazeera hotel -- was a popular venue among Somali politicians and foreign nationals. Among the dead were three of the assailants who carried out the assault on the Jazeera hotel; however, the majority of the victims were security personnel and civilians. The chief of police, General Abdihakin Dahir Saacid, explained in remarks to the news media that the assault began when a car loaded with explosives rammed a police car outside the hotel. A second car loaded with explosives was detonated after emergency crews arrived on the scene. A week earlier in late 2013, a dozen individuals, including six military troops, died as a result of a remote-controlled bomb in a restaurant in Mogadishu. Suspicion for the attacks at the restaurant and at the Jazeera hotel in Mogadishu rested on the Somali Islamist terror group, al-Shabab.

On Feb. 21, 2014, an attack by militant Islamists on the Somali presidential compound, known as Villa Somalia, killed about a dozen individuals. The Islamic terrorists rammed through the gates of the heavily-fortified compound using a vehicle packed with explosives, and then launched a gun battle with presidential guards. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud escaped the assault unharmed and said that the attack would not impede his effort to move Somalia in a more positive direction after years of violence and unrest. However, the fact that Islamic militants were able to

carry out such a brazen attack on the presidential compound raised questions about the ever-disturbing level of insecurity and instability in the failed state of Somalia. It should be noted that the terror group, al-Shabab, which was aligned with the notorious terrorism base, al-Qaida, immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the third week of March 2014, Islamist terrorists from the group, al-Shabab, attacked a hotel in central Somalia where African Union (AU) peacekeepers were staying. The attack began with a suicide bomber ramming a car through the gates of the hotel in the city of Bulobarde, and was followed by a shooting spree as gunmen opened fire indiscriminately. Several people were reported to have died as a result; included in the dead were troops, civilians, the military commander of Hiran province, and a local government official. The assailants were ostensibly targeting AU forces, who have worked with Somali forces to rid Somalia of its Islamist extremist threat posed by al-Shabab. First, the target of the attack was a hotel in Bulobarbe (located about 130 miles north of the Somali capital of Mogadishu), which was known to house AU peacekeepers. Second, AU forces had recently driven al-Shabab from Bulobarde and so it was quite likely that al-Shabab was showing that it had not, in fact, been vanquished. It should be noted that al-Shabab is aligned with the notorious terror base, al-Qaida, and has a strongly extremist agenda oriented towards imposing its strict Islamic code. Although joint AU and Somali forces have placed pressure on al-Shabab, the Islamist group has continued to wage attacks in Somalia. Indeed, only a day before this attack at the hotel in Bulobarde, al-Shabab militants attacked a military convoy near the capital Mogadishu, killing four Somali soldiers.

Somali terror group al-Shabab suspected of attacks in Kenya

In the early summer of 2014, a spate of attacks in Kenya were believed to be the work of the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab. The latest attack in July 2014 hit the resort coastal of region of Lamu and left dozens of people dead.

Going back to May 2014, two explosions rocked the Kenyan capital of Nairobi killing several people and injuring scores more. The two blasts targeted passengers buses on a busy highway and appeared to have been caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) commonly used by Jihadist terrorists. Around the same period of in May 2014, the area of Kasarani to the northeast of Nairobi was also struck by violence, as two other blasts targeted a hotel and an underpass. Scores of casualties were reported in those cases, with Kenyan authorities noting that 20 of the injuries were deemed critical. Blame rested on the Somalia-based Islamist extremist entity, al-Shabab.

In mid-June 2014, Kenya's coastal area of Mpeketoni was struck by deadly violence -- quite likely at the hands of the Somalia-based extremist Islamist group, al-Shabab. The horrific wave of violence that rocked the coast of Kenya close to the resort island of Lamu ensued over the course of two days and left as many as 60 dead. A police station, a number of hotels, and neighboring

villages, were among the targets struck by ongoing raids by gunmen. Many of the victims were watching World Cup matches at the time of the attacks. It should be noted that extremist Islamists have deemed the act of watching football matches to be "un-Islamic." As a result, Kenyan authorities urged citizens to remain at home to watch the 2014 World Cup, rather than gathering in public places.

Meanwhile, al-Shabab wasted no time in claiming responsibility as it declared the attacks were carried out in retaliation for Kenyan troops in Somalia as part of a force to repel Islamist extremists.

President Uhuru Kenyatta took the perplexing path of denying al-Shabab's claim of responsibility and instead claiming that local political groups were responsible for the violence. He took note of the fact that most of the victims were ethnic Kikuyus -- of the same ethnicity as him. However, the truth of the matter was that with most of the victims being non-Muslims, it was conceivable that al-Shabab was behind the bloodshed.

Regardless of the competing claims as to the actual assailants, several people were arrested a few days after the attacks. Via Twitter, the local police chief, David Kimaiyo, said: "We have arrested several suspects in connection to Mpeketoni incident including the owner and driver of one the vehicles used by attackers." He also tweeted: "Also in police custody is a suspect who was operating social media accounts purportedly used by al-Shabab to claim responsibility."

The Kenyan coast was again the site of bloodshed in the last week of June 2014 when a gang armed with machetes raided the village of Witu, located in close proximity to Mpeketoni. The attack resulted in the hacking deaths of five people. As was the case in the previous coastal attack, the identity of the assailants remained hazy. Blame, as usual, rested on al-Shabab; however, the president continued to insist that recent attacks were the work of political rivals.

In the second week of July 2014, the coastal resort region of Lamu was again hit by violence when armed men raided a trading center, attacked a police station, and burned down homes. As many as 30 people were killed as a result of the brutal assault. Most of the victims were reported to be adult men. Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the bloodshed and made it clear that its main target for attack outside of Somalia was Kenya.

It should be noted that al-Shabab, which is aligned with the terror enclave al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, these bombings in 2014 were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat.

That being said, there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has made it clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). These various attacks in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, at the close of June 2014, Kenya intensified its air strikes on the Islamist extremist groups bases in Somalia.

Al-Shabab extremists Islamists step up attacks in Somalia

July 2014 saw extremist terrorist Islamists from al-Shabab step up their attacks in Somalia. In one incident on July 3, 2014, al-Shabab terrorists blocked the car of a Somali legislator, Mohamed Mohamud Hayd, and his bodyguard, before opening fire on both men and ultimately killing them. A second legislator as well as a secretary for the parliament were also injured in the attack. In a separate incident, al-Shabab terrorists attacked Somalia's presidential compound with a car bomb while some of their gunmen broke penetrated the security perimeter. While they were eventually repelled by security forces at the presidential compound, and while the president was not in residence at the time and was thus unharmed, the fact of the matter was that al-Shabab was able to successfully carry out a direct hit on a high value target.

U.S. strike kills leader of al-Shabab terrorist group; African peacekeeping forces make gains

Joint African peacekeeping and Somali forces were making gains against Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabaab, in the southern town of Bulamareer, located close to the Islamist terrorists' stronghold of Barawe. The joint operation also saw success by recapturing territory in the surrounding areas of the Lower Shabelle region.

The effort in late August 2014 in Bulamareer -- about 50 miles to the north of Barawe -- and the surrounding region was part of an overall operation that started earlier in 2014 and had been aimed at repelling al-Shabab from towns where they have held sway. Of particular concern had been the southern part of the country, which was largely been under al-Shabab's control.

In recent times, al-Shabab has transformed from being a Somalia-focused Islamic insurgency into an extremist Jihadist entity that carries out brutal terrorist attacks both at home and in neighboring countries. While international forces operating in Somalia have placed pressure on al-Shabab, it has aligned itself with al-Qaida, taken advantage of Somalia's weak government, and relentlessly worked to destabilize Somalia the Horn of Africa.

At the start of September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the

leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft. Days after the United States Pentagon confirmed the operation, Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby confirmed that the primary target -- Godane -- had been successfully eliminated in the strikes on an encampment and convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu.

For several years, Godane -- also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair -- has stood near the top of the United States Department of State's most wanted list. He was radicalized in Sudan and Pakistan, and reportedly fought in Afghanistan, before becoming the al-Shabab's leader in 2008. A year later, he officially announced al-Shabab's alliance and allegiance to the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida. In 2012, the United States placed a \$7 million bounty on his head. In recent years, al-Shabab's activities have expanded beyond Somalia's borders to neighboring countries with an increasingly Islamist Jihadist agenda. Of note was the horrific terror attack at a Kenyan shopping mall in 2013.

While the United States has not been known to be actively involved in operations in Somalia, it has nonetheless supported African Union forces tasked with repelling al-Shabab from Mogadishu. As well, the United States has gone after high value al-Shabab targets in Somalia before. To that end, in October 2013, United States special forces raided terrorist enclaves in Somalia, with the objective of going after a "high value" terrorist from al-Shabab. Because al-Shabab fighters responded with heavy fire, United States commandos chose to retreat from the scene although there was some suggestion that one al-Shabab terrorist was killed. It was later revealed that the target of that action was Abdukadir Mohamed Abdukadir, a Kenyan al-Shabab commander also known by the name "Ikrima."

Now, in September 2014, the United States could claim victory for eliminating one of the world's most important terrorists, and specifically, the leader of al-Shabab -- Godane. In this way, the successful strike operation struck a heavy blow to the al-Shabab terror group, which did not have an obvious successor to Godane.

In Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed used the opportunity to urge al-Shabab to lay down arms. He announced a 45-day amnesty for terrorists aligned with the group to renounce their association in al-Shabab. It was to be seen if al-Shabab would respond affirmatively to the offer, or simply regroup and re-emerge once again.

The answer to that question came in October 2014 when a car bomb was detonated outside a popular cafe in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Several people were killed as a result and more than a dozen others were injured. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicion immediately rested on the Islamist extremist terror group, al-Shabab, which was aligned with al-Qaida. Indeed, the security authorities in Somalia made clear in interviews with the international media that they believed al-Shabab to be behind the bloodshed.

Since the car bombing occurred after Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed announced a 45-day amnesty for terrorists aligned with the group to renounce their association in al-Shabab, it was apparent that Islamist extremist terrorists were not interested in taking that route. Defeats were being interpreted as "tactical withdrawals," and the al-Shabab fighters were using the opportunity to simply regroup and re-emerge once again.

The car bombing in Mogadishu also stood as a reminder of the fact that al-Shabab was, by no means, defeated. Now, the Islamist extremist group was clearly resorting to guerrilla warfare as it continued to terrorize the public.

It should be noted that in recent times, al-Shabab has transformed from being a Somalia-focused Islamic insurgency into an extremist Jihadist entity that carries out brutal terrorist attacks both at home and in neighboring countries. Of note was the horrific terror attack at a Kenyan shopping mall in 2013. While international forces operating in Somalia have placed pressure on al-Shabab (as discussed here), it has aligned itself with al-Qaida, taken advantage of Somalia's weak government, and relentlessly worked to destabilize Somalia the Horn of Africa.

Government Update:

On Nov. 11, 2014, the parliament of Somalia was debating the fate of Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. At issue was a looming confidence vote and the question of whether or not the head of government should be sacked. But supporters of the prime minister were not about to sit quietly while members of parliament decided his political future. Instead, a sudden protest erupted with the prime minister's support base blowing whistles, beating on jugs, and shouting "No Motion!" The disruption forced the parliamentary speaker to bring a halt to the session and, as a result, the confidence proceedings were placed on hold. Parliamentary Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman said, "Due to noise, we hereby close the session today. Let it be another day."

That new day ensued on Nov. 15, 2014, but as before, disturbances from supporters of the prime minister again brought an end to the proceedings, and no confidence vote was able to go forward. Two days later on Nov. 17, 2014, more than a dozen cabinet ministers signed a petition urging the prime minister to resign in the interests of national stability and unity. As expected, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed rejected this call.

On Nov. 24, 2014, yet another attempt was made in parliament to advance a confidence vote. As before, the proceedings devolved into chaos as member of parliament supportive of the prime minister ripped the document covering the attendance register as well as the very copies of the confidence motion. Once again, the parliamentary speaker was forced to suspend the session. Prime Minister Ahmed soon announced a cabinet shuffle; however, it was not known in that development would ease the tensions.

It should be noted that in the backdrop of the parliamentary drama resided the ongoing feud between Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud. That feud reached new heights when the prime minister removed some of the president's stalwarts in a cabinet shuffle. The president reacted by declaring the move to be null and void since he had not been consulted; the president also ordered all officials to return to their original duties.

Attempts to broker a resolution between Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud ended in failure, setting the stage for the confidence vote discussed above. That vote occurred on Dec. 6, 2014, and ended in the removal of Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed from office. As many as 153 members of parliament voted to oust Sheikh Ahmed whereas only 80 votes were registered in his favor.

President Mohamud applauded the move, saying, "I welcome the step taken by the parliament today. I congratulate those who voted yes and those who voted no, which signals the political maturity Somalia has reached to solve its internal differences."

Note that as December 2014 came to a close, the Somali parliament approved the appointment of Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as the country's new prime minister, replacing Sheikh Ahmed who was removed, as discussed above. Sharmarke had experience as head of government, having served as prime minister in 2009 and 2010. Following the vote in parliament approving Sharmarke as the new prime minister, he said, "I will soon name an all-inclusive cabinet of ministers." He added, "I assure you that there will be no political conflict, everything will be solved through consultation and discussion."

Somali-based Islamist terror group al-Shabab carries out brutal attacks in Kenya; targets non-Muslims in massacre

In late 2014, the Somali-based terror group al-Shabab carried out attacks in Kenya, close to the border with Somalia and Ethiopia. In these brutal massacres, al-Shabab clearly targeted Kenyan non-Muslims for execution.

In the first attack that occurred at the end of November 2014, al-Shabab terrorists targeted a bus bound for the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. They ambushed the vehicle, ordered passengers off the bus at gunpoint, and killed all non-Muslims at close range. Three passengers survived by reciting verses of the Koran -- presumably proving their Islamic "credentials."

In a statement, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, an al-Shabab spokesperson, said, "The Mujahideen successfully carried out an operation near Mandera early this morning, which resulted in 28

crusaders perishing, as revenge for the crimes committed by the Kenyan crusaders against our Muslim brethren in Mombasa." At issue were a series of raids by police on mosques in the city of Mombasa, which were identified as terrorist recruiting venues and safe havens for storing weapons.

For its part, Kenyan authorities made it clear that their armed forces would be carrying out an offensive against camps and strongholds believed to be frequented by al-Shabab. Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto promised retribution and justice, saying in a televised address: "I want to assure you all that all those responsible for the loss of lives of Kenyans -- we will pursue you everywhere, be it in Kenya, be it in Somalia."

But only days later on Dec. 2, 2014, al-Shabab carried out its second brutal attack -- this time targeting non-Muslims at a quarry in Kormey, located close to the town of Mandera. Following a similar pattern as before, the al-Shabab terrorists rounded up the workers while they were sleeping in their tents, singled out 36 Christian quarry workers, lined them up for mass execution and then shot them to death. Four victims were said to have been beheaded in what could only be understood as a massacre. Muslim quarry workers were allowed to live.

Once again, al-Shabab made clear that they were responsible for these acts of barbarism, justifying the group's brutality on the basis of Kenya's military engagement as part of a multilateral coalition fighting al-Shabab in Somalia. Al-Shabab spokesperson Ali Mohamud Rage declared, "We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression."

It should be noted that al-Shabab began as an Islamist entity battling the weak government of Somalia; it has since aligned with al-Qaida and other notorious Islamist extremist terrorism enclaves. Moreover, al-Shabab has expanded its goals, transforming itself from a national militant group to more of a terrorist entity with Jihadist ambitions as it has increasingly launched attacks outside of Somalia. Kenya is a favored target for al-Shabab due to that country's involvement in a multilateral military effort to rout out al-Shabab from the Horn of Africa.

Indeed, al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, the relentless and ongoing attacks in 2014 were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat.

To that end, less than year later in May 2014, two explosions rocked the Kenyan capital of Nairobi killing several people and injuring scores more. The two blasts targeted passengers buses on a busy highway and appeared to have been caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) commonly used by Jihadist terrorists. Around the same period of in May 2014, the area of

Kasarani to the northeast of Nairobi was also struck by violence, as two other blasts targeted a hotel and an underpass.

In June 2014, Kenya's coastal area of Mpeketoni was struck by deadly violence. The horrific incidence of violence rocked the coast close to the resort island of Lamu, ensuing over the course of two days and leaving as many as 60 people dead. A police station, a number of hotels, and neighboring villages, were among the targets struck by ongoing raids by gunmen. Many of the victims were watching World Cup matches at the time of the attacks. It should be noted that extremist Islamists have deemed the act of watching football matches to be "un-Islamic." As a result, Kenyan authorities urged citizens to remain at home to watch the 2014 World Cup, rather than gathering in public places.

In the second week of July 2014, the coastal resort region of Lamu was again hit by violence when armed men raided a trading center, attacked a police station, and burned down homes. As many as 30 people were killed as a result of the brutal assault. Most of the victims were reported to be adult men. Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the bloodshed and made it clear that its main target for attack outside of Somalia was Kenya.

Now, as discussed here, the close of the year 2014 was being marked in Kenya by continuing bloodshed and brutality at the hands of al-Shabab, who seemed intent on punishing Kenya for its military effort against Islamic terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

That being said, there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has throughout made it clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). These various attacks in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, since mid-2014, Kenya has intensified its air strikes on the Islamist extremist group's bases in Somalia.

With the brutal massacres in Kenya in late 2014 at the hands of al-Shabab, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta moved to make sweeping changes as regards his national security team. Faced with growing criticism over the government's failure to do more to protect Kenyans from attacks from al-Shabab, President Kenyatta on Dec. 2, 2014 sacked the police chief, David Kimaiyo. He also fired Interior Minister Joseph ole Lenku who managed to retain his post even after the 2013 al-Shabab attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall discussed above. With these moves made, President Kenyatta urged his opposition critics to shift their attention to national unity, saying, "Our bickering only emboldens the enemy."

Meanwhile, in the first part of December 2014, al-Shabab continued to be active at home in Somalia. A car bomb at the Mogadishu international airport struck a United Nations convoy and

left four people dead. None of the dead were United Nations staffers; the victims included a police officer and bodyguards working for a contractor. The town of Baidoa to the northwest of Mogadishu was also struck by a suicide bombing at a restaurant; that attack left five people dead and more than 20 others injured.

Note that at the end of December 2014, United States air strikes in Somalia reportedly targeted and killed an al-Shabab leader. Abdishakur, who was also known as Tahliil, led the Amniyat unit of the terror group deemed to be responsible for a spate of suicide attacks in Mogadishu.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Johnson warns of threat to Western shopping centers by al-Shabab

On Feb. 22, 2015, United States Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson issued a warning to Westerners regarding possible attacks on shopping centers by the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab. At issue was the emergence of a videotaped message from al-Shabab urging its supporters to carry out attacks at shopping malls in the United States, Canada, and the United States. An al-Sahab terrorist with a British accent specifically mentioned three large shopping malls -- the Mall of America in Minnesota, the West Edmonton Mall in Canada, and Oxford Street in London -- as desirable targets of attack.

Of significance was the fact that al-Shabab had already carried out a horrific and brutal massacre at the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013, killing close to 70 people. Given this record of bloodthirsty violence, the United States homeland security chief was taking this new threat from al-Shabab seriously. In an interview with CNN, Secretary Johnson said, "Anytime a terrorist organisation calls for an attack on a specific place, we've got to take that seriously." He further noted that there was a "new phase" of terrorism looming in which attacks would increasingly come from "independent actors in their homelands."

Deadly attacks by Islamist terror group al-Shabab

The spring of 2015 was marked by a burst of violent attacks by the Islamist terror group, al-Shabab. One attack in March 2015 targeted a hotel in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. A second attack in Mogadishu in April 2015 targeted a government building. Meanwhile, al-Shabab also manage to carry out a vicious assault at a university in Kenya, yielding a high death toll. Cumulatively, the attacks made clear that while al-Shabab was under pressure from regional forces, which had curtailed its consolidation of territory, the militant Islamist group was concentrating its efforts in the realm of Jihadist terrorism.

In late March 2015, al-Shabab carried out a suicide car bomb attack outside a Mogadishu hotel.

The attack took place at the Maka al Mukarama hotel in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, which was popular with diplomats, dignitaries, and business people. After the initial assault, al-Shabab then raided the hotel, killing more than a dozen people and wounding at least 30 others. Included in the dead was the Somali ambassador to Switzerland, Yusuf Baribari, as well as several other government officials. Some diplomats survived the raid by jumping from hotel windows. The siege ended only after United States-trained Somali troops stormed the hotel. Militants as well as soldiers were killed in the ensuing clashes. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the act of terrorism, with a spokesperson for the Islamist terror group saying, "We don't consider it to be a hotel - it's a government base."

In mid-April 2015, al-Shabab carried out an attack at the ministry for higher education. The suicide car bombing struck the walls of the ministerial compound, resulting in the deaths of several people, and sparking a lengthy gun battle. Before the attack was concluded, al-Shabab was claiming responsibility. In an interview with Reuters News, Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, al-Shabab's military operations spokesperson declared, "We are inside and fighting goes on!"

In the third week of April 2015, Somalia was again struck by violence at the hands of al-Shabab when a car bomb exploded outside a restaurant in Mogadishu. Approximately a dozen people were killed as a result and several more were injured. The Banooda restaurant, located close to the Central Hotel, was a popular spot with politicians and was the clear target of attack. As before, blame rested with the terror group, al-Shabab, which has made clear that politicians were favored targets for attack.

Around the same period, there was an attack on a United Nations vehicle in Garowe, the main city of the Puntland region; at least seven people died as a result. Al-Shabab wasted no time in taking responsibility for that attack, making clear that its effects would be felt across Somalia.

Earlier, at the start of April 2015, al-Shabab launched a violent terror attack at a university in northeastern Kenya, relatively close to the border with Somalia. Terrorists from al-Shabab stormed the Garissa College University, opening fire, and targeting non-Muslims. At least 145 people were killed while scores more were wounded. The terrorists identified Muslim students and released them, preferring to target the Christian students instead.

It should be noted that the Somali-based terror group has made Kenya a favorite terror target, justifying its brutality on the basis of Kenya's military engagement as part of a multilateral coalition fighting al-Shabab in Somalia. Al-Shabab spokesperson Ali Mohamud Rage was on the record, as he declared, "We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression."

It should also be noted that al-Shabab began as an Islamist entity battling the weak government of

Somalia; it has since aligned with al-Qaida and other notorious Islamist extremist terrorism enclaves. Moreover, al-Shabab has expanded its goals, transforming itself from a national militant group to more of a terrorist entity with Jihadist ambitions as it has increasingly launched attacks outside of Somalia. Kenya has thus become a preferred target for al-Shabab due to that country's involvement in a multilateral military effort to rout out al-Shabab from the Horn of Africa.

Significantly, al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, the relentless and ongoing attacks in 2014 and 2015 in Kenya close to the border with Somalia were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat, while also making it clear that the entire border region was vulnerable to terrorism.

Note that on April 6, 2015, Kenya launched air strikes on terror training bases in Somalia. Kenyan military authorities made a point of noting that the air strikes were not being carried out in retaliation to the Garissa massacre, but were simply the latest phase of ongoing operations against al-Shabab in Somalia that commenced as an Africa Union mission in 2011. In an interview with BBC News, a Kenyan military spokesperson, David Obonyo, said, "The bombings are part of the continued process and engagement against al-Shabab, which will go on."

For its part, al-Shabab was basking in its latest successful operation in barbarism. Reiterating that Kenya was in its crosshairs for the long haul, the Somali Islamist terror group declared a "long, gruesome war" against Kenya.

Terror group al-Shabab carries out attacks in Kenya and Somalia

Kenya has been under an enduring terror threat from the Somalia-based Islamist terror group, al-Shabab for several years. The latest manifestation of violence at the hands of al-Shabab in Kenya occurred in the first week of July 2015, when Islamist terrorists from al-Shabab carried out an attack at a military camp in Madera county of Kenya close to the border with Somalia. The assailants appeared to have detonated explosives before opening fire in the middle of the night. As many as 14 people were killed as a result, with several more individuals being injured. The victims were believed to be workers from a nearby quarry. Somalia-based al-Shabab wasted little time in claiming responsibility for the bloodshed. Madera was a prime spot for al-Shabab given the fact that the terror group carried out an attack at a quarry in the area in late 2014, killing dozens of quarry workers in that attack.

More recently, in April 2015, al-Shabab terrorists carried out a massacre at the Garissa University in northeastern Kenya yielding a massive death toll. The massacre was the worst single terror

attack by al-Shabab on Kenyan territory. It marked the latest act of brutality by the Islamist terror group against Kenya, which was participating in a joint regional operation aimed at eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab in the region. Al-Shabab's other notorious terror attack on Kenyan soil took place in 2013 when the terror group carried out a brazen and brutal assault on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi killing dozens of people.

Meanwhile, al-Shabab remained active at home in Somalia. On July 10, 2015, the terror group launched an attack at the Wehliya Hotel in Mogadishu, killing at least six civilians. Somali authorities said that one assailant used a car bombing to commence the attack at the gate of the hotel, leading to the deaths of the victims. Somali security forces responded and three terrorists were killed in the ensuing melee. There were reports of a second attack and ensuing siege at a second hotel in Mogadishu on the same day.

The attacks made clear that despite a regional effort to vanquish the terror group, al-Shabab remained a menace not only at home in Somalia, but also across the border in Kenya. In fact, al-Shabab was continuing its campaign of aggression against Kenya in retaliation for that country's involvement in the regional anti-Shabab effort.

Government Update:

In late September 2015, an ongoing contretemps in Somalia involving the executive and legislative branches of government ended peacefully when the parliament dropped its impeachment motion against the president.

Going back to August 2015, Somali members of parliament filed a motion to dismiss President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on the basis of accusations of abuse of office. According to Parliamentary Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari, 93 members of parliament filed the motion, effectively crossing the 90 member threshold to sign a motion that would be debated in parliament. As such, the motion would likely be advanced in parliament; however, a much tougher threshold of 275 parliamentary votes in favor of the motion would be needed to actually dismiss the president. For its part, the office of the president released a statement acknowledging the motion and expressing respect for the role of parliament in governance.

By the end of September 2015, the contretemps between the executive and legislative branches of government came to an end when Parliamentary Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari announced that the impeachment motion against President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud would be withdrawn. It seemed that the higher 275 vote threshold in parliament to sustain the impeachment motion would not be easily reached, since the majority of the members of parliament preferred to resolve their differences with the president through dialogue. To that end, a meeting was scheduled for Oct. 7, 2015. Parliamentary Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari made the

announcement saying, "We have dropped the motion against the president." He noted that the decision was in the best interests of the country, as he added, "This also came after considering the political, security and economic situation of the country."

It should be noted that the cadre of 93 members of parliament opposed to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud had not abandoned their grievances. One lawmaker, Mohamed Abdullahi Fadhayee, said in an interview with Reuters News that he was not supportive of the move to drop the impeachment motion and pursue dialogue. Instead, he declared, "We have neither discussed nor given up the motion. We shall take the matter to the court."

Al-Shabab carries out terror attack on hotel in Somali capital of Mogadishu

On Nov. 1, 2015, the Islamist terror group, al-Shabab, carried out a terror attack at the Sahafi hotel in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, which was a popular venue for members of government. The attack actually entailed two initial car bombings followed by a raid of the Sahafi Hotel by gunmen. The attack triggered a gun battle with joint government and African Union forces, which finally neutralized the violence but not before 15 people had been killed. Included in the dead were the owner of the hotel, one member of parliament, and a general involved in the major military operation that ousted al-Shabab from Mogadishu four years earlier.

Attacks plague Somali capital of Mogadishu

At the start of June 2016, terrorists carried out an attack on the Ambassador Hotel in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, leaving at least 10 people dead and scores more wounded. The assailants used a car bomb at the gates of the hotel to commence the attack, and then exploited the distraction to storm the hotel itself. Among the dead at the hotel was a member of parliament.

Editor's Note:

Somalia has had no real central government since 1991. Indeed, Somalia has lacked any internationally recognized central government since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. In recent years, despite the establishment of a fragile transitional government, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords and Islamic militias.

In its heyday, the al-Shabab Islamic militia held sway in the early 2000s in Somalia, but was driven from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government of Somalia. Since that time, resurgent al-Shabab Islamists have been launching a violent insurgency. A ceasefire pact between

the Somali government and al-Shabab in 2008 had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal.

From the start of the fresh insurgency, although no official figures are available, estimates suggest that tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been made homeless by the fighting in Mogadishu. As people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, there are now as many as one million people are internal refugees in Somalia. With the state of lawlessness increasing in Somalia, a dire security situation plaguing the country, and the mass scale of population displacement, the United Nations warned that half the entire Somali population has been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. In more recent years, the situation can be characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

In 2010, al-Shabab -- which was at that point was allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying out terrorist acts outside national borders. Indeed, al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, thus indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya around the same period in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

In August 2011, al-Shabab forces were said to be withdrawing from the capital city of Mogadishu; however, that exit did not augur an end to violence and terrorism as exemplified by the October 2011 attack on the Mogadishu government compound. That being said, an offensive by Somali government forces, aided by African Union troops and incursions from neighboring Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, placed hitherto unknown pressure on al-Shabab.

In 2012, al-Shabab announced it was officially joining al-Qaida, and effectively formalized its identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa. The group then continued its brutal assault in Somalia, attacking a high level national delegation as recently as the spring of 2012, and carrying out attacks in Mogadishu 2013.

In 2013, al-Shabab burnished its terrorist Jihadist credentials by carrying out a brazen and brutal assault on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, killing dozens of victims. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the shocking rampage of horror and bloodshed and promised that the Westgate massacre was just the "opening act" in campaign that was intended to go on and on, as the militant Islamist terror group sought to punish Kenya for its involvement in the regional military operation against al-Shabab. Indeed, al-Shabab was intent on extending its reach and carrying out retaliatory attacks on Kenya because of its military involvement in Somalia as part of the African Union mission.

In September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft to strike an encampment and a convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu, successfully eliminating Godane. But even the death of Godane did not bring an end to al-Shabab's brutality and barbarism.

In late 2014, al-Shabab remained active with the terror group's Jihadist inclinations manifest fully in the form of continuing attacks that targeted Kenya. Most of the 2014 attacks occurred in towns close to the border with Somalia and appeared to target non-Muslims, with Christians being the favored target for death.

In 2015, al-Shabab was extending its Jihadist ambitions with a call for supporters to carry out terror attacks at popular shopping malls in the West. In fact, al-Shabab was urging sympathizers and allies to launch mall attacks reminiscent of its own Westgate massacre in Kenya to be carried out in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. But before such an end could take place, in the spring of 2015, Kenya was targeted again by al-Shabab, with more than 145 people dying at Garissa University at the hands of al-Shabab terrorists. While Kenya vowed a strong response, it was apparent that al-Shabab continued to function and to carry out brutal terror cross-border attacks with relative impunity, even declaring a "long and gruesome" war against Kenya. As the year 2015 continued, al-Shabab made good on its threats as it continued to carry out attacks on Kenyan soil in the border area with Somalia. However, al-Shabab was also continuing its assault on Somali soil, and as of 2016, ensuring that several years later it remained a threat to national security.

It should also be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland -- consisting of five districts in the — opposition declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region -- known as Puntland—declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

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See Bibliography for list of general research sources. Supplementary sources: Africanews.org, Prunier, Drysdale, Africa Watch, SIPR; Africanews.org; the United Nations; International Crisis Group; Somalilandgov.com; Somaliland.org; Africa Confidential; Moszynski, Peter; McKinley, James; Huliaras, Asteris; Prunier, Gerard; Menkhous, Ken; Clarke, Walter; Herbst, Jeffrey.

Political Risk Index

Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9

Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	3.5
Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4

Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7

Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5
Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4

Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia	5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8
Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5

Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8
Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3
Ireland	8-8.5
Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9
Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7

Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6
Liberia	3.5
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9
Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5

Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5
Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7
Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5

Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5
Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6.5-7
Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5
Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5

Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5
Seychelles	7
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8
Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5

Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6.5
Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6
Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6

Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

***Methodology**

The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)
2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)

3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)
4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)
5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)
6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)
7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)
8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)
9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)
10. corruption (the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Yemen](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected [Syria](#) where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory. [Iraq](#) has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. [Libya](#) has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; at issue in [Libya](#) have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. [Yemen](#) continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels,

secessionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between [Iran](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#). Conversely, [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, [Zimbabwe](#) continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring [Zimbabwe](#) with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. [Somalia](#) also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in [Kenya](#). On the upside, [Nigeria](#), which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#) and [Guinea](#) have been downgraded due to political unrest, with [Guinea](#) also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as [Serbia](#), [Croatia](#), and [Hungary](#), due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, [Singapore](#) retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have

affected the rankings for [Mexico](#) , [Guatemala](#), and [Brazil](#). [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the [United States](#) maintains a strong ranking along with [Canada](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the [United States](#) to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Political Stability

Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The [Political Stability](#) Index is calculated using an established methodology* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
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Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7
Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9

Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5
Brazil	7
Brunei	8
Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5

Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5
Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7

East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4
Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr. Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6

Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4
Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6
Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9
India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5
Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8

Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2
Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5
Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5
Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9

Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8
Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5
Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5

Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6
Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9

Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9
Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5
Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5

Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8

Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	8.5
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5
Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power (free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)
2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability
3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights
4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance
5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")
6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection
7. level of unchecked crime and corruption
8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security
9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation
10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), and [Somalia](#) -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both [Afghanistan](#) and [Somalia](#) continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In [Afghanistan](#), while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In [Somalia](#), while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror

group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in [Somalia](#), but across the border into [Kenya](#) with devastating results/ Also in this category is [Iraq](#), which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, [Libya](#), and [Yemen](#) have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. [Syria](#) has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddafi landscape of [Libya](#) has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is [Yemen](#), which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secessionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a [Iran](#) and Sunni [Saudi Arabia](#).

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](#), the landscape had calmed. In [Egypt](#), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia](#) -- the country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe](#) has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](#), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali](#) was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso](#) and [Burundi](#) as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](#), an attempted

coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](#), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea](#) has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola health crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. [Serbia](#) and [Albania](#) were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while [Romania](#) was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, [Greece](#) was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, [Germany](#), [France](#), [Switzerland](#), the [United Kingdom](#), the [Netherlands](#), and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. [Cambodia](#) was very slightly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, [Haiti](#) retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. [Mexico](#) was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. [Guatemala](#) was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. [Brazil](#) was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the

stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. [Colombia](#) was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States. Meanwhile, the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Panama](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, [Fiji](#) was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, [Maldives](#) has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Freedom Rankings

Freedom Rankings

Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR"

and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	
Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	
Argentina*	2	2	Free	
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	
Australia*	1	1	Free	
Austria*	1	1	Free	
Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free	
Bahamas*	1	1	Free	
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	

Barbados*	1	1	Free	
Belarus	7	6	Not Free	
Belgium*	1	1	Free	
Belize*	1	2	Free	
Benin*	2	2	Free	
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free	
Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free	
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free	
Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free	
Brazil*	2	2	Free	
Brunei	6	5	Not Free	
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	
Burma	7	7	Not Free	
Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	↑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	

Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	↓
Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	↓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	
Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	
Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	

Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	↓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	
Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	
Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	↓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	
Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	
Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	

Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	
Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	
Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	
Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	↓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	
Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	

Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	↓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	
Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	
Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	
Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	↑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	

Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	↓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	
Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	
Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	↑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	↓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	

Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	↓
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	↓
Norway*	1	1	Free	
Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	
Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	
Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	↓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	

Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	
San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	
Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	
Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	↓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	

Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	
Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	
Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	
Switzerland*	1	1	Free	↓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	
Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	

Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	↓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	
Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	
United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	
Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	↓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.

Available at URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

Human Rights

Human Rights in Somalia

Overview

Somalia is currently a transitional parliamentary federal government. It has been without a true central government since 1991. It is split into three autonomous areas: the self-declared Somaliland, the State of Puntland, and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Overall, Somalia's human rights record remains poor. Variables such as drought, floods, the 2005 tsunami, poverty, inter-clan fighting, and the displacement of more than 400,000 people have negatively affected an already poor human rights situation.

Citizens in Somalia do not have the full ability to change their government due to the lack of an

established central authority. Restrictions on freedoms of speech, press, assembly, movement, association, and religion persist. Privacy rights of citizens are also limited.

Arbitrary arrest and detention as well as torture, rape and beatings at the hands of the security forces remain problems. Kidnapping is also an issue, particularly in Mogadishu. Politically-motivated killings and extrajudicial killings often occur.

Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening. In most regions, the judicial system relies on some combination of traditional and customary justice, Shari'a (Islamic) law, and the pre-1991 Penal Code. Fair trials are rare and if one occurs, a lengthy pretrial detention is likely to accompany it.

Child abuse, persecution of and religious minorities in various clan regions, and human trafficking persist. Child labor, forced labor, and restrictions on workers rights are also areas of concern.

Human rights defenders in Somalia risk their lives when they campaign for the respect of human rights and report on the nation's atrocities. Many who are not native to Somalia have left the region, while a few stay and continue to speak out.

Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

Not Ranked; see full listing of the Human Development Index located in the Social Overview of this report for list of ranked countries.

Human Poverty Index Rank:

Not Ranked

Gini Index:

N/A

Life Expectancy at Birth (years):

49 years

Unemployment Rate:

N/A

Population living on \$1 a day (%):

N/A

Population living on \$2 a day (%):

N/A

Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):

N/A

Internally Displaced People:

400,000

Total Crime Rate (%):

N/A

Health Expenditure (% of GDP):

Public: N/A

% of GDP Spent on Education:

N/A

Human Rights Conventions Party to:

- International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Conventions on the Rights of the Child (Signed but not yet ratified)
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

*Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life-expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the United Nation's Human Development Report since 1993.

*Human Poverty Index Ranking is based on certain indicators used to calculate the Human Poverty Index. Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, adult literacy rate, population without sustainable access to an improved water source, and population below income poverty line are the indicators assessed in this measure.

*The Gini Index measures inequality based on the distribution of family income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality (income being distributed equally), and a value of 100 perfect inequality (income all going to one individual).

*The calculation of the total crime rate is the % of the total population which has been effected by property crime, robbery, sexual assault, assault, or bribery (corruption) related occurrences.

Government Functions

Editor's Note:

Somalia has had no real central government since 1991. Indeed, Somalia has lacked any internationally-recognized central government since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. In recent years, despite the establishment of a fragile transitional government, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords and Islamic militias.

In its heyday, the al-Shabab Islamic militia held sway in the early 2000s in Somalia, but was driven from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government of Somalia. Since that time, resurgent al-Shabab Islamists have been launching a violent insurgency. A ceasefire pact between the Somali government and al-Shabab in 2008 had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal.

From the start of the fresh insurgency, although no official figures are available, estimates suggest that tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been made homeless by the fighting in Mogadishu. As people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, there are now as many as one million people are internal refugees in Somalia. With the state of lawlessness increasing in Somalia, a dire security situation plaguing the country, and the mass scale of population displacement, the United Nations warned that half the entire Somali population has been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. In more recent years, the situation can be characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

In 2010, al-Shabab -- which was at that point was allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying out terrorist acts outside national borders. Indeed, al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, thus indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya around the same period in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

In August 2011, al-Shabab forces were said to be withdrawing from the capital city of Mogadishu; however, that exit did not augur an end to violence and terrorism as exemplified by the October

2011 attack on the Mogadishu government compound. That being said, an offensive by Somali government forces, aided by African Union troops and incursions from neighboring Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, placed hitherto unknown pressure on al-Shabab.

In 2012, al-Shabab announced it was officially joining al-Qaida, and effectively formalized its identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa. The group then continued its brutal assault in Somalia, attacking a high level national delegation as recently as the spring of 2012, and carrying out attacks in Mogadishu 2013.

In 2013, al-Shabab burnished its terrorist Jihadist credentials by carrying out a brazen and brutal assault on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, killing dozens of victims. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the shocking rampage of horror and bloodshed and promised that the Westgate massacre was just the "opening act" in campaign that was intended to go on and on, as the militant Islamist terror group sought to punish Kenya for its involvement in the regional military operation against al-Shabab. Indeed, al-Shabab was intent on extending its reach and carrying out retaliatory attacks on Kenya because of its military involvement in Somalia as part of the African Union mission.

In September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft to strike an encampment and a convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu, successfully eliminating Godane. But even the death of Godane did not bring an end to al-Shabab's brutality and barbarism.

In late 2014, al-Shabab remained active with the terror group's Jihadist inclinations manifest fully in the form of continuing attacks that targeted Kenya. Most of the 2014 attacks occurred in towns close to the border with Somalia and appeared to target non-Muslims, with Christians being the favored target for death.

In 2015, al-Shabab was extending its Jihadist ambitions with a call for supporters to carry out terror attacks at popular shopping malls in the West. In fact, al-Shabab was urging sympathizers and allies to launch mall attacks reminiscent of its own Westgate massacre in Kenya to be carried out in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. But before such an end could take place, in the spring of 2015, Kenya was targeted again by al-Shabab, with more than 145 people dying at Garissa University at the hands of al-Shabab terrorists. While Kenya vowed a strong response, it was apparent that al-Shabab continued to function and to carry out brutal terror cross-border attacks with relative impunity, even declaring a "long and gruesome" war against Kenya. As the year 2015 continued, al-Shabab made good on its threats as it continued to carry out attacks on Kenyan soil in the border area with Somalia.

It should also be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also

two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland---consisting of five districts in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Executive Branch:

At the executive level, the president is the chief of state and the prime minister is the head of government.

Legislative Branch:

-
Unicameral National Parliament or Golaha Shacabka Soomaaliya consists of the House of the People (275 seats; members directly elected to serve four year terms)

Note that the National Parliament will become bicameral in the future with the formation of an upper house that will consist of 54 seats with members indirectly elected by regional governing councils to serve four-year terms.

Judicial Branch:

Following the breakdown of the central government, most regions have reverted to local forms of conflict resolution, either secular, traditional clan-based arbitration, or Islamic (Shari'a) law with a provision for appeal of all sentences. That being said, there is a Transitional Supreme Court (consists of the chief justice and 3 judges) under the terms of the 2004 Transitional National Charter (TNC), a Supreme Court based in Mogadishu and an Appeal Court were established.

Constitution:

A new constitution was promulgated in 2012 as part of the transition to stability.

Legal System:

No national system; there is a mixed legal system of civil law, Islamic Shari'a law, and customary law (referred to as Xeer)

Notes on Somaliland and Puntland:

Somaliland has established its own government and, by the end of 2001, was more institutionally developed than the government of Somalia. While the international community does not recognize it as an independent state, the government of (now deceased) President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal effectively governed the territory. Somaliland is a highly institutionalized entity with an active cabinet, legislature and judiciary. The Council of Ministries (cabinet) is appointed by the president and approved by the legislature. The parliament is bicameral consisting of a House of Representatives and a House of Elders. After the death of Egal in 2002, Vice-President Dahir Riyale Kahim was sworn in as President. Presidential elections were held in May 2003 in which Riyale beat his opponent. Parliamentary elections were held in September 2005. Somaliland's stability has been widely acknowledged but it has not received formal recognition from the international community.

On Aug. 1, 1998, Puntland declared a self-autonomous region to avoid violence, which had wrecked other parts of Somalia since the ouster of dictator Said Barre in 1991. However, in July 2001 Puntland was thrown into turmoil when Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed whose term office as a leader of the regional government had expired, claimed to have extended his tenure for another three years. The Puntland Supreme Court disqualified him from office and clan elders and an overwhelming majority of delegates who attended a special conference supported this decision. On Aug. 26, 2001, militia groups ousted him when he tried to stay in office beyond his term. In late August 2001 delegates from five regions of Puntland convened in Garowe, the regional capital city and elected Jama Ali Jama the new president and Ahmed Mahmud Gunle as a vice-president. On Nov. 21, 2001, gunmen loyal to ousted leader Col Abdullahi Yusuf attacked Garoweh with the intention of capturing the presidency. The conflict has reverted to an admixture of political and clan competition for power. The situation became more regional with reports that Ethiopia has sent in troops to support ousted leader Col. Abdullahi Yusuf. Gen Ade Musa took over the leadership.

Government Structure

Names:

Conventional long form:

None

Conventional short form:

Somalia

Former:

Somali Republic

Type:

None; no permanent national government; transitional, parliamentary federal government

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in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Executive Branch:

Head of State:

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud (elected in 2012); see "Elections Primer" below for information about 2012 elections

Note:

A transitional governing entity with a five-year mandate, known as the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), was established in October 2004; the TFIs relocated to Somalia in June 2004; in 2011, the TFIs were given a one-year extension to 2012.

Timetable for Political Transition:

On May 24, 2012, leaders of various factions in Somalia agreed to a timetable for a political transition in the country, ultimately culminating with a presidential election by Aug. 20, 2012. Also ensconced in the transition agreement were provisions for a draft constitution and a new federal parliament that would be appointed by group of elders by July 20, 2012 - ahead of the presidential election. To that end, the members of the new federal parliament would be responsible for choosing the president in an internal election a month later in August 2012.

The agreement was forged in Ethiopia and signed by six parties -- interim President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, his prime minister, the parliamentary speaker, as well as the regional leaders of Galmudug, Puntland and a representative of the pro-government militia al-Sunna Wal Jama'a. The al-Shabab Islamists aligned with the terror enclave a-Qaida, who have controlled swaths of central Somalia, were not party to the agreement. Also outside the agreement was the self-declared independent state of Somaliland, which broke away at the start of the civil war in 1991. It should be noted that there was a sense of urgency in crafting the deal with donors warning that they would withdraw funding if the country's political crisis did not soon come to an end.

Primer on 2012 Elections in Somalia:

On Aug. 20, 2012, Somalia's newly-selected members of parliament were sworn into office -- a development intended to demonstrate the country's desire to transition from a failed state into more stable governance. The new parliament would be tasked with electing a new president of the country in a parliamentary vote.

A presidential election was set for August 2012 as part of the stabilization agenda for Somalia. Already on the agenda was a new draft constitution, which would set the path for the establishment of a new government. These development sought to catapult Somalia out of its current status as one of the world's failed states.

Three top political leaders in Somalia indicated they would be contesting the presidency; these three individuals included the incumbent president, the prime minister, and the speaker of the outgoing parliament. Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was a moderate Islamist who has held presidential power since 2009; he was seeking re-election and has been viewed as a front runner in this 2012 contest. Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, a senior academic who has gained notoriety as a technocrat, was looking to elevate his political fortune and consolidate the political gains made in recent times. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adam, the speaker of the outgoing parliament and a businessman, was advancing his candidacy on the basis that he was the face of political change in Somalia. More than a dozen other candidates would also be contesting the presidency.

Note: The vote on the presidency took place on Sept. 10, 2012 via secret ballot. Late on that day, it was announced that Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was the country's new president with 190 votes. The incumbent president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed made it into the final round but ended up in second place. For his part, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud thanked the members of parliament for their votes, expressed gratitude to the international community for assisting Somalia, and cast the election as a historic development.

On Oct. 6, 2012, the newly-elected president of Somalia named a new prime minister. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud announced that Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid, a political neophyte, had been selected as the country's new head of government. Shirdon Saaid was a successful entrepreneur in Somalia's neighboring country of Kenya who was married to a well-known Somali peace activist, Asha Haji. It should be noted that a presidential election was held a month prior, on Sept. 10, 2012, as part of the stabilization agenda for Somalia. Already on the agenda was a new draft constitution, which would set the path for the establishment of a new government. Now, in October 2012, the country had a new president, who had chosen a new prime minister to lead the government. The selection of Shirdon Saaid, who was quite clearly outside the cauldron of volatile and contentious clan politics in Somalia, was being interpreted as a wise choice by observers. Indeed, as the first major presidential decision, it was expected to bolster the standing of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. These developments sought to catapult Somalia out of its current status as one of the world's failed states.

Note on Somali parliament and prime minister --

A no-confidence vote in the parliament of Somalia ended the tenure of Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon who had been in office for little more than a year. Indeed, he was the fifth prime minister in six years to be ousted by the Somali parliament. At issue in this case was disagreement between members of parliament and Shirdon over the selection of members of a new cabinet. The development was sure to add further instability to the failed nation state of Somalia. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was expected to eventually appoint a new prime minister. Note that as of December 2013, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed became the new head of government.

Less than a year later, on Nov. 11, 2014, the parliament of Somalia was debating the fate of Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. At issue was a looming confidence vote and the question of whether or not the head of government should be sacked. But supporters of the prime minister were not about to sit quietly while members of parliament decided his political future. Instead, a sudden protest erupted with the prime minister's support base blowing whistles, beating on jugs, and shouting "No Motion!" The disruption forced the parliamentary speaker to bring a halt to the session and, as a result, the confidence proceedings were placed on hold. Parliamentary Speaker Mohamed Sheikh Osman said, "Due to noise, we hereby close the session today. Let it be another day."

That new day ensued on Nov. 15, 2014, but as before, disturbances from supporters of the prime minister again brought an end to the proceedings, and no confidence vote was able to go forward. Two days later on Nov. 17, 2014, more than a dozen cabinet ministers signed a petition urging the prime minister to resign in the interests of national stability and unity. As expected, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed rejected this call.

On Nov. 24, 2014, yet another attempt was made in parliament to advance a confidence vote. As before, the proceedings devolved into chaos as member of parliament supportive of the prime minister ripped the document covering the attendance register as well as the very copies of the confidence motion. Once again, the parliamentary speaker was forced to suspend the session. Prime Minister Ahmed soon announced a cabinet shuffle; however, it was not known in that development would ease the tensions.

It should be noted that in the backdrop of the parliamentary drama resided the ongoing feud between Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud. That feud reached new heights when the prime minister removed some of the president's stalwarts in a cabinet shuffle. The president reacted by declaring the move to be null and void since he had not been consulted; the president also ordered all officials to return to their original duties.

Attempts to broker a resolution between Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud ended in failure, setting the stage for the confidence vote discussed above. That vote occurred on Dec. 6, 2014, and ended in the removal of Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed from office. As many as 153 members of parliament voted to oust Sheikh Ahmed whereas only 80 votes were registered in his favor.

President Mohamud applauded the move, saying, "I welcome the step taken by the parliament today. I congratulate those who voted yes and those who voted no, which signals the political maturity Somalia has reached to solve its internal differences."

Note that as December 2014 came to a close, the Somali parliament approved the appointment of Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as the country's new prime minister, replacing Sheikh Ahmed who was removed, as discussed above. Sharmarke had experience as head of government, having served as prime minister in 2009 and 2010. Following the vote in parliament approving Sharmarke as the new prime minister, he said, "I will soon name an all-inclusive cabinet of ministers." He added, "I assure you that there will be no political conflict, everything will be solved through consultation and discussion."

Legislative Branch:

National Parliament:

Unicameral National Parliament or Golaha Shacabka Soomaaliya consists of the House of the People (275 seats; members directly elected to serve four year terms)

Note that the National Parliament will become bicameral in the future with the formation of an upper house that will consist of 54 seats with members indirectly elected by regional governing councils to serve four-year terms.

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Note: The vote on the presidency took place on Sept. 10, 2012 via secret ballot. Late on that day,

it was announced that Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud was the country's new president with 190 votes. The incumbent president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed made it into the final round but ended up in second place. For his part, Hassan Sheikh Hohamoud thanked the members of parliament for their votes, expressed gratitude to the international community for assisting Somalia, and cast the election as a historic development.

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Somali parliament ousts prime minister; new head of government named --

A no-confidence vote in the parliament of Somalia ended the tenure of Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon who had been in office for little more than a year. Indeed, he was the fifth prime minister in six years to be ousted by the Somali parliament. At issue in this case was disagreement between members of parliament and Shirdon over the selection of members of a new cabinet. The development was sure to add further instability to the failed nation state of Somalia. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamad was expected to eventually appoint a new prime minister. Note that as of December 2013, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed became the new head of government.

Judicial Branch:

Following the breakdown of the central government, most regions have reverted to local forms of conflict resolution, either secular, traditional clan-based arbitration, or Islamic (Shari'a) law with a provision for appeal of all sentences. That being said, there is a Transitional Supreme Court (consists of the chief justice and 3 judges) under the terms of the 2004 Transitional National Charter (TNC), a Supreme Court based in Mogadishu and an Appeal Court were established.

Constitution:

The new Constitution became permanent in 2012

Legal System:

No national system; there is a mixed legal system of civil law, Islamic Shari'a law, and customary law (referred to as Xeer)

Administrative Divisions:

18 regions (plural - n.a., singular - "gobolka"): Awdal, Bakool, Banaadir, Bari, Bay, Galguduud, Gedo, Hiiraan, Jubbada Dhexe, Jubbada Hoose, Mudug, Nugaal, Sanaag, Shabeellaha Dhexe, Shabeellaha Hoose, Sool, Togdheer, and Woqooyi Galbeed

Political Parties and Leaders:

Numerous clans are fighting for power

Principal Government Officials

Leadership and Government of Somalia

Pres. HASSAN SHEIKH Mohamud
Prime Min. Omar Abdirashid Ali SHARMARKE
Dep. Prime Min. Ridwan HIRSI Mohamed
Min. of Agriculture Ahmed Hassan GABOBE
Min. of Animals, Plants, & Pasture Salim Aliyow IBROW
Min. of Commerce & Industry Adan Mohamed NUUR
Min. of Communication & Press Mohamed Ibrahim Haji ADAN
Min. of Constitutional Affairs Hussein Mohamed SHEIKH
Min. of Defense Abdulkadir Sheikh Ali DINI, Gen.
Min. of Education Khadar Bashir ALI
Min. of Energy & Water Mohamed Hassan ADAN
Min. of Finance Mohamed Aden IBRAHIM
Min. of Fishing & Maritime Resources Mohamed Omar EYMOY
Min. of Foreign Affairs & Intl. Cooperation Abdusalam OMER

Min. of Gen. Activities & Rebuilding Nadifo Mohamed OSMAN
Min. of Health Hawa Hassan MOHAMED
Min. of Human Resources & Labor Abdiweli Ibrahim Sheikh MUUDEEY
Min. of Information Mohamed Abdi HAYIR
Min. of Interior & Federalism Abdurahman Mohamed HUSSEIN
Min. of Justice Abdullahi Ahmed JAMA
Min. of Livestock Said Hussein IID
Min. of Mineral Resources & Petroleum Mohamed Mukhtar IBRAHIM
Min. of National Security Abdirizak Omar MOHAMED
Min. of Planning & Intl. Cooperation Abdirahman Yousuf Ali AYNTA
Min. of Ports & Maritime Transportation Nur Farah HERSI
Min. of Public Works & Reconstruction Salah Sheikh Osman MUSE
Min. of Religious Affairs Abdulkadir Sheikh Ali IBRAHIM
Min. of Telecommunications & Posts Guled KASIM
Min. of Transport & Aviation Ali Ahmed JAMA
Min. of Women & Family Affairs Sahra Mohamed Ali SAMATAR
Min. of Work & Social Affairs Numan Sheikh ISAMAIL
Min. of Youth & Sports Mohamed Abdullahi HASSAN
Governor, Central Bank Bashir Isse ALI
Ambassador to the US
Permanent Representative to the UN, New York Elmi Ahmed DUALE

-- as of 2015

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

Leadership of Somalia

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Three top political leaders in Somalia indicated they would be contesting the presidency; these three individuals included the incumbent president, the prime minister, and the speaker of the outgoing parliament. Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was a moderate Islamist who has held presidential power since 2009; he was seeking re-election and has been viewed as a front runner in this 2012 contest. Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, a senior academic who has gained notoriety as a technocrat, was looking to elevate his political fortune and consolidate the political gains made in recent times. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adam, the speaker of the outgoing parliament and a businessman, was advancing his candidacy on the basis that he was the face of political change in Somalia. More than a dozen other candidates would also be contesting the presidency.

Note: The vote on the presidency took place on Sept. 10, 2012 via secret ballot. Late on that day, it was announced that Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud was the country's new president with 190 votes. The incumbent president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed made it into the final round but ended up in second place. For his part, Hassan Sheikh Hohamoud thanked the members of parliament for their votes, expressed gratitude to the international community for assisting Somalia, and cast the election as a historic development.

On Oct. 6, 2012, the newly-elected president of Somalia named a new prime minister. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud announced that Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid, a political neophyte, had been selected as the country's new head of government. Shirdon Saaid was a successful entrepreneur in Somalia's neighboring country of Kenya who was married to a well-known Somali peace activist, Asha Haji. It should be noted that a presidential election was held a month prior, on Sept. 10, 2012, as part of the stabilization agenda for Somalia. Already on the agenda was a new draft constitution, which would set the path for the establishment of a new government. Now, in October 2012, the country had a new president, who had chosen a new prime minister to lead the government. The selection of Shirdon Saaid, who was quite clearly outside the cauldron of volatile

and contentious clan politics in Somalia, was being interpreted as a wise choice by observers. Indeed, as the first major presidential decision, it was expected to bolster the standing of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. These developments sought to catapult Somalia out of its current status as one of the world's failed states.

Foreign Relations

General Relations

Since the fall of the Barre regime, the foreign policy of the various entities in Somalia has centered on gaining international recognition, winning international support for national reconciliation, and obtaining international economic assistance.

Regional Relations

The 1977-78 Ogaden War with Ethiopia, although a humiliating defeat for Somalia, had created deep suspicions in the Horn of Africa concerning the intentions of the Siad Barre regime. The continuing strain in Somali-Ethiopian relations tended to reinforce these suspicions.

Civil strife in Ethiopia and repressive measures in the Ogaden caused more than 650,000 ethnic Somalis and Oromo residing in Ethiopia to flee to Somalia by early 1978. The integration of so many refugees into an essentially agrarian society afflicted by persistent drought was beyond Somalia's economic capacity. In the absence of a peace agreement, prospects for repatriation continued to be virtually nonexistent.

For 10 years after the Ogaden War, the Siad Barre government refused to renounce its public support of the Ethiopian guerrilla organization, the Western Somali Liberation Front, and provided it with clandestine military assistance to carry out raids inside Ethiopia. Ethiopia's Mengistu government responded in kind by providing bases, sanctuary, and military assistance to the SSDF and the SNM.

Siad Barre's fear of Ethiopian military power induced him in the early 1980s to begin a process of rapprochement with Somalia's other neighbors, Kenya and the former French territory of Djibouti. Kenya had long suspected Somalia of encouraging separatist activities among the predominantly ethnic Somali population in its Northern Frontier District. Following a 1981 summit meeting with Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi in Nairobi, Siad Barre's public renunciation of any Somali territorial claims on Kenya helped dissipate mistrust. In November 2001, Kenya reopened its 500km (300 mile) border with Somalia that was closed for three months to stem a flow of illegal firearms. This action was seen as a continuing effort in the search for peace in Somalia.

Beginning in 1982, both Kenya and Djibouti, apparently encouraged by Siad Barre's stated willingness to hold direct talks with Mengistu, made diplomatic efforts to mediate between Somalia and Ethiopia. It was not until 1986, however, that Siad Barre and Mengistu finally agreed to meet. This first meeting since before the Ogaden War took place in the city of Djibouti and marked the beginning of a gradual rapprochement. Siad Barre's willingness to defuse the situation along the Somali-Ethiopian border stemmed from the combined pressures of escalating guerrilla activity, overt Ethiopian military threats, drought and the destabilizing presence of hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian refugees. Siad Barre and Mengistu held a second meeting in April 1988, at which they signed a peace agreement and formally reestablished diplomatic relations. Both leaders agreed to withdraw their troops from their mutual borders and to cease support for armed dissident groups trying to overthrow the respective governments in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

In 1991, Mengistu in Ethiopia was toppled by Meles Zenawi around the same time that the government of Siad Barre in Somalia collapsed.

On the international scene, the Somali leader at the time, Hassan, gathered with other leaders in New York in October at the opening of the United Nations (U.N.) Millennium Summit where he gave a speech offering apologies for blood clashes between the U.N. peacekeepers and Somalis in the 1990s. He also appealed for international support in Somali's effort to search for peace and reconciliation. Clearly, the fact that Somalis flag was raised at the U.N. headquarters for the first time in a decade is a welcome recognition of President Abdulkassim Salat Hassan 's interim government by the U.N. and part of the international community.

Relations with the U.N. devolved, however, in 2002 following the kidnapping of a number of U.N. aid staffers in Somalia. Allegations of human rights abuses have also soured relations and resulted in the U.N. call for a war crimes tribunal in Somalia. Meanwhile, the U.N. also evacuated its staffers due to highly unstable political "in country" conditions.

In November 2000, Somali was also represented at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development regional meeting in Khartoum. And on March 1, 2001, President Hassan represented Somali at the Organization of African Unity summit in Tripoli for the first time in 10 years.

In March 2001 Ethiopia hosted a new convened Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council, or SRRC, comprising southern Somalia faction leaders opposed to Somalia's Transitional National Government (TNG) under the chairmanship of Mogadishu faction leader Hussein Aidede. The hosting of this conference led to the TNG accusing Ethiopia of assisting the activities of warlords and prolonging the conflict in Somalia.

In April 2001 the then-Somali Prime Minister Ali Khalif Galaydh of the TNG asked the U.N. to demobilize militia group and increase its peace-building operations in Somalia. For its part, SRRC was opposed to this idea on the grounds that there was no legitimate authority in Somalia. It also accused Egypt and Saudi Arabia of funding TNG. All the same, for historical reasons, geopolitical concerns and national interest, Ethiopia always keeps an eye on what is happening in Greater Somalia.

In mid-July 2003, the leader of the transitional government in Somalia verbally attacked the Ethiopian government. Speaking at the African Union summit in Mozambique, President Abdulkassim Salat Hassan accused Ethiopia of destabilizing Somalia. Specifically, he alleged that his government in Mogadishu could have done much more in the three years of its existence had it not been for the daily interference of Ethiopia in Somalia's internal affairs. The Somali president accused Ethiopia of continuing to violate the arms embargo on Somalia by supplying large quantities of weapons to warlords opposed to the transitional government. He also claimed that Ethiopia's policy was to undermine the emergence of a strong, united Somalia -- a country that has been without an internationally-recognized government for more than 12 years.

Following new elections in the transitional government, new Somalian leadership came to power, led by Abdullahi Yusuf in 2004. Overall, the situation with Ethiopia continued to be somewhat problematic despite the fact that Ethiopia, under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, has publicly supported the peace process and several years later, became something of an ally to Somalia's new interim government, led Abdullahi Yusuf. Indeed, anyone threatening to overthrow the Somalian government would also be dealt with as an aggressor to Ethiopia.

The first part of 2006 saw the increasing ascendancy of Islamist militias in Somalia, to the detriment of the transitional government. By mid-2006, the Union of Islamic Courts had taken control of Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. The city, which had once been in the hands of warlords, was never safe enough for the country's weak transitional government to be seated there. Instead, the government had been forced to operate from the city of Baidoa. The fact that control of Mogadishu had shifted hands from warlords to these Islamist militias was a source of consternation for the government. Moreover, the ascendancy of the Union of Islamic Courts was also becoming a matter of concern for the government of Ethiopia, which was opposed to the Islamist militias and allied with the interim government of Somalia. In fact, the governments of Ethiopia and Somalia shared strong ties dating back to the 1990s when Ethiopia aided Somalia in defeating an Islamist militia.

When the news emerged that the Islamists were making further progress past the capital city, there were warnings from Ethiopia that it would send its troops into Somalia to protect the interim government. Ethiopia's threat to intervene on behalf of the Somali government served to raise the ire of the Islamists. The situation was not helped by reports in August 2006 of sightings of Ethiopian troops on the ground in Somalia -- a scenario that spurred threats of a "holy war" by the Islamist leadership against the Ethiopians. But complaints about foreign intervention were also being levied by the Somali government. At the other end of the equation, there were increasing suggestions that arms were flowing to the Islamist militias via Eritrea. Although the Eritrean government denied the charges that it was supplying arms to Islamist militias, the transitional government of Somalia reacted by declaring its support for an Eritrean rebel group.

As the interest groups entrenched themselves into opposing enclaves, anxieties increased about regional conflict in the region. Notably, observers began to speculate that Ethiopia and Eritrea were resuming their hostilities and using Somali terrain as the proxy for a return to war. The presence of Ethiopian and Eritrean military interests in Somalia served only to magnify the depth of the problem. In fact, according to the United Nations, there were more than 8,000 Ethiopian troops operating in Somalia as allies of the weak transitional government. Meanwhile, approximately 2,000 Eritrean troops were said to have been earlier deployed to Somalia to assist the Islamic Courts.

By December 2006, the Union of Islamic Courts issued a seven-day deadline to Ethiopia, warning that if Ethiopian troops were not withdrawn from Somalia, they would face imminent attack. Ethiopia responded by denying that its soldiers were fighting in Somalia, saying instead that hundreds of its forces were simply assisting the transitional government. In fact, Islamists and government forces -- apparently aided by Ethiopian troops -- were ensconced in fierce clashes in mid-December 2006. Ethiopia's head of government, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi dismissed the deadline and the possibility of attack, noting that such threats were nothing new.

On December 24, 2006, Ethiopia openly admitted that it was carrying out an offensive in Somalia. The government of Ethiopia acknowledged that its troops were battling militias from the Islamic Courts. Berhan Hailu, Ethiopia's Information Minister, said in an official statement that his country's military had been deployed into Somali territory for the purpose of "self-defensive measures." To this end, Hailu noted, "The Ethiopian government has taken self-defensive measures and started counter-attacking the aggressive extremist forces of the Islamic Courts and foreign terrorist groups." His remarks were regarded as a significant break from previous statements by Ethiopia, which mostly consisted of a variety of denials about its activities in Somalia.

Now, the reality on the ground in the border areas between Somalia and Ethiopia was characterized by heavy fighting. In addition to the fierce battles apparently taking place between the Islamists and the government forces, there were also reports of massive air strikes and shelling by Ethiopian

fighters upon Islamist-held towns. In an interview with Agence France Presse, Sheikh Hassan Derrow of the Union of Islamic Courts reacted to these developments in saying, "The enemy of Allah has started bombing our civilians." He and his Islamist cohorts promised to push back the advancing Ethiopian troops.

Despite the Islamic Courts' calls to foreign fighters to join in the "holy war" in Somalia against Ethiopia, the situation on the ground was intensifying. Days later, the conflict was spreading past the border regions and deeper into Somali territory. There were conflicting reports about the number of people apparently killed in the fighting.

By December 28, 2006, Ethiopian forces had advanced deep into Somali territory and were now approaching the capital city of Mogadishu. With imminent attacks upon them, Islamist forces abandoned Mogadishu after holding control over the city for several months. Reports issued by the Associated Press indicated that some members of the Islamist militias were abandoning their duties and pledging their allegiance to elders in the city. There were also reports of gunfire throughout the city and looting of buildings that had been used by officials of the Union of Islamic Courts.

At the close of 2006, the transitional government of Somalia, aided by Ethiopian forces, had control of Mogadishu. Islamist militias had fled the city, with many of their ranks heading toward the southern city of Kismayo -- one of their few remaining strongholds. Ethiopian troops were following the Islamists and moving toward Kismayo as well. Islamists then quickly retreated from Kismayo, even as thousands of civilians fled the port city amidst fears of violence. Such anxieties had been heightened when news spread that there had been violent clashes between Ethiopian troops and Islamists in the area of Jilib, to the north of Kismayo.

At the start of 2007, members of the Islamist militias were moving toward the border with Kenya. The transitional government of Somalia called on Kenya to close its borders. The Kenyan government responded by saying that it would convene a summit of East African countries to consider how to deal with the emerging crisis.

Even with the Islamists on the run and with the transitional government now retrieving some of its power, thanks to Ethiopian military support, the situation in Somalia promised to be challenging. The government was still faced with the prospect of reaching some sort of agreement with the Islamists, or risk continued destabilization in a country that had not seen peace and security for years. While the transitional government called for talks with the Union of Islamic Courts, the Islamists said that no dialogue was possible until Ethiopian forces exited Somalia. Indeed, the presence of foreign troops in Somalia was a matter of controversy among locals with divided loyalties. As a result, Ethiopia promised to depart quickly from Somalia.

In an interview with the British media in mid-January 2007, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia said that his country's forces were set to begin its withdrawal from Somalia. The

Ethiopian leader said, "We want to withdraw at the earliest possible opportunity but we want to do it in a responsible manner."

For its part, the transitional government of Somalia was expected to concentrate on diplomacy in the first part of 2007. At issue was the matter of negotiations with the ousted Islamists and warlords. Such negotiations were aimed at bringing these disparate and rival factions into government, for the purpose of stabilizing the country and in the interests of long-term peace.

Meanwhile, the African Union was set to discuss a plan by which it would deploy a peacekeeping force to Somalia, which could eventually be replaced with United Nations peacekeepers at some point in the future. Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf had earlier called for a "speedy deployment" of peacekeepers to his country. While the United States offered to provide \$10 million in funds toward the creation of peacekeeping force that would operate under the aegis of the African Union, few countries initially pledged to send troops to Somalia. The European Union, however, joined the fray in the second week of January 2007, saying that it might send its own peacekeeping force to Somalia.

On the table for discussion in 2008 was the matter of peacekeeping troops in Somalia. Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin said that his country had made the "irrevocable" decision to soon pull back its approximately 3,000 troops from Somalia.

Accordingly, there was an imminent need for some sort of stabilizing force in Somalia, given its status as a quasi-failed state with a paralyzed government, and a dismal security situation on the ground, with Islamic militants on the offensive. To that end, the African Union (AU) decided to convene a crisis meeting among its Peace and Security Council to discuss a future peacekeeping force in Somalia. African Union Commission leader, Jean Ping, noted that Nigeria, Burundi and Uganda had indicated some willingness to contribute limited troops to the Somali cause.

Finally, as of January 2009, Ethiopia's Information Ministry said that about 3,000 of its troops completed their withdrawal from Somalia two years after crossing the border to help the embattled Somali government fight against Islamist insurgents. While Ethiopian troops appeared to have left Mogadishu, surrounding areas, and the southern part of the country, locals in the town of Baidoa - the seat of the transitional government -- said that Ethiopian troops remained there.

On July 11, 2010, scores of people died in double explosions in the Ugandan capital of Kampala. Local Ugandans as well as foreigners were among the victims. Ugandan police said the bombs exploded at a rugby club and at a restaurant as football fans watched the final match of the World Cup. In an interview with Agence France Press, Inspector General of Police Kal Kayihura said, "These bombs were definitely targeting World Cup crowds."

While there was no conclusive information about those behind the attacks, Police Chief Kaihura

expressed the view that Somalia's extremist Islamic militia — al-Shabab, which has been linked with al-Qaida -- may have been to blame. Indeed, the feared Somali militants certainly made threats against Kampala, perhaps because of the fact that Ugandan troops were deployed in Mogadishu. Only days earlier, al-Shabab commander, Sheik Muktar Robow, demanded that militants attack venues in Uganda and Burundi since both countries have contributed troops to the African Union force in Mogadishu. Meanwhile, another al-Shabab commander, Sheik Yusuf Sheik Issa, refused to confirm or deny his group's role in the Kampala twin bombings but expressed happiness that they occurred at all. During an interview with the Associated Press, he said, "Uganda is one of our enemies. Whatever makes them cry, makes us happy. May Allah's anger be upon those who are against us."

With all available indications suggesting that Somali-based al-Shabab was responsible for the attacks, the group itself removed doubt by claiming responsibility for what appeared to be its first terror attack outside Somalia's borders. For its part, the Obama administration in the United States pledged help to track down those responsible. At the same time, the United States Department of States made it clear that it was focused on al-Shabab as a threatening entity with global jihadist aspirations. As well, it pointed to Executive Order 13536, signed by United States President Barack Obama, which was intended to block the finances of militant extremist Islamists in Somalia deemed to be a threat to the peace process in that country.

On Oct. 23, 2011, a grenade attack on a nightclub in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi left more than a dozen people wounded. The assailant was able to escape and attention switched to the motive for the seemingly random attack. A day later, there was another blast -- this time at a bus terminal in downtown Nairobi. At least one person died as a result of this blast. Suspicion quickly rested on the Somali Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabab, given the timing of recent events. Only a week prior, Kenya deployed troops to Kenya to investigate al-Shabab, which Kenyan authorities blame for a spate of kidnappings in recent times. Al-Shabab warned of reprisal attacks if Kenyan troops did not exit Somalia. Thus, there was speculation that the extremist Islamist terror enclave, which has ties to al-Qaida, may have been making good on that threat. That speculation was bolstered by a warning from the United States embassy in Nairobi, which warned of an "imminent threat" of attacks in Kenya.

See Special Entries below for latest developments as regards the efforts against al-Shabab.

Africa Union

At its July 2-11, 2001, meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, the Organization of African Unity officially approved the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the new African Union. Former foreign minister of Cote d'Ivoire, Amara Essy, was elected the first Secretary-General of the Africa Union. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, reacted with the statement that

"This historic effort will require leadership, courage and willingness to depart from the ways of the past, if it is to do for Africa what the European Union has done for Europe." The goal of the African Union is to be a continental as obody that will pave the way to a better life for all Africans. Where the OAU was criticized for its lack of action on economic and social fronts, the African Union is charged with development as its primary task. Following a model based on the European Union, the African Union is intended to bridge the economic gaps between African countries and thrust the continent onto the world economic stage as a single entity. The African Union Bill was based on a convergence of South African president Thabo Mbeki's African development plan, and the Plan Omega proposed by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade. It therefore adds to its economic mandate the political mandate that all of Africa should seek democratic consolidation.

There are significant criticisms to the new African Union, though. Some fear that too much faith is being placed in a document that makes more sense in theory than in practice. The strongest criticism, however, is that the African Union's largest force has been Libyan President Muammar al-Qadhafi. The U.S. has made its objections to the Union clear no doubt due to a lack of trust in Qadhafi's motives. Many African leaders backed the Union although they also demonstrated a lack of trust in Qadhafi's motives. At the opening of the meeting of the OAU leaders noted that Qadhafi failed to mention Africa's founding fathers despite the fact it was Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah who was the founder of pan-Africanism some forty years ago. Indeed, Qadhafi has backed groups that are markedly anti-pan-Africanist in his own country. Other comments challenged the controversial role Libyan nationals often play in sub-Saharan African countries. Yet the most controversial position of Qadhafi no doubt was his statement that "We cannot be neutral here. We are here for the Africans, not the Europeans. We are here for the blacks, not for the whites." With Louis Farrakhan, leader of the U.S.-based Nation of Islam movement, standing behind him, this statement was taken as an affront to increased western relations as opposed to the Union's goal of increasing economic ties with wealthier countries.

Other Significant Relations

Somalia has a long history of cultural, religious and trade ties with the Arabian Peninsula. Although Somalis ethnically are not Arabs, they identify more with Arabs than with their fellow Africans. Thus it was not surprising when Somalia joined League of Arab States (Arab League) in 1974, becoming the first non-Arab member of that organization. Initially, Somalia tended to support those Arab countries such as Algeria, Iraq and Libya that opposed United States policies in the Middle East. After its defeat in the Ogaden War, the Siad Barre regime aligned its policies more closely with those of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, both of these countries began to provide military aid to Somalia. Other Arab states, in particular Libya, angered Siad Barre by supporting Ethiopia. In 1981 Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Libya, claiming that Libyan leader Muammar al Qadhafi was supporting the SSDF and the nascent SNM. Relations were not restored until 1985.

Throughout the 1980s, Somalia became increasingly dependent upon economic aid from the conservative, wealthy oil-exporting states of Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This dependence was a crucial factor in the Siad Barre regime's decision to side with the United States-led coalition of Arab states that opposed Iraq following that country's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Support for the coalition brought economic dividends with Qatar canceling further repayment of all principal and interest on outstanding loans, and Saudi Arabia offered a US\$70 million grant and promised to sell its oil at below prevailing international market prices.

Prior to the Ogaden War, Somalia had been allied with the Soviet Union, and its relations with the United States (U.S.) were strained largely because the Soviet Union sided with Ethiopia in the Ogaden War. A United States-Somali rapprochement began in 1977 and culminated in a military access agreement in 1980 that permitted the United States to use naval ports and airfields at Berbera, Kisimayu and Mogadishu, in exchange for military and economic aid. The United States subsequently refurbished facilities originally developed by the Soviet Union at the Gulf of Aden port of Berbera. The United States Rapid Deployment Force used Berbera as a base for its Operation Bright Star exercises in 1981, and American military advisers were permanently stationed there one year later. Somali military units participated in Operation Bright Star joint maneuvers in 1985. The base at Berbera was used in the fall of 1990 during the deployment of personnel and supplies to Saudi Arabia in preparation for the Persian Gulf War. Many argue that continued U.S. aid throughout the 1980s in fact lent strength to Siad Barre's regime in the face of extreme opposition, affording him the armaments necessary to control rebels by force. When the U.S. stopped giving aid with the fall of the Berlin Wall, this contributed to the eventual collapse of the Barre government and the subsequent civil war. To date, U.S. has no embassy in Somalia.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the U.S., there has been increasing suspicion among U.S. policymakers that because of its lawlessness, Somalia is a likely destination for terrorists and therefore should be targeted in the next phase of Washington's campaign against terrorism. In the meantime, the U.S. forced Al Barakat, the country's leading finance company, to suspend operations -- accusing it of raising, managing, investing and distributing funds for Al-Qaida. The closure of Al Barakat in November 2001 was predicted to spell dire humanitarian consequences, as it had become the cornerstone of Somali economy.

In April 2002, a new Somali telecoms company bought out Al Barakat, after the latter was, indeed, forced out of business following US government allegations it had links with the al-Qaida network. The new company, Hormud Telecom Somalia, spent US\$2 million buying the equipment and premises of Al Barakat. The company said it had no links with Al Barakat, which had more than 40,000 subscribers.

In January 2007, the U.S. carried out air strikes against Islamic extremists in the southern part of Somalia. It was the first military operation by the U.S. in Somalia since the 1990s when 18

American troops were killed in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

The U.S. tracked Islamists, believed to have links with the terrorist enclave, al-Qaida, via aerial reconnaissance. Once detected, strikes were launched from a U.S. gunship located at a military base in Djibouti. U.S. sources said that the Islamists in Somalia provided safe haven for the al-Qaida operatives responsible for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, which left more than 250 people dead. This very cadre of Islamist operatives was also believed to be responsible for the attacks on Israeli interests in 2002, which left 15 people dead. The Islamists, however, denied these claims.

On the ground in Somalia, reports suggested that certain areas, such Hayo, Afmadow, and the island of Badnado, were particularly hit by the air strikes. Thousands of civilians found themselves at the center of the violence with air strikes raining down from above, Ethiopian tanks on the ground, and Kenyan soldiers guarding the border. In this regard, the transitional government of Somalia acknowledged that there were over 25 deaths as a result of the strikes.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military noted that an aircraft carrier had been deployed to the waters off the Somali coast to join three other warships, which were carrying out anti-terrorism operations.

In April 2009, Somali pirates hijacked the Maersk Alabama in the Indian Ocean. The vessel was destined to dock at Mombassa in Kenya and was carrying food aid destined for Somalia, Rwanda and Uganda.

The Somali pirates, armed with guns, moved into proximity of the Maersk Alabama via a small boat. They used ropes and hooks to climb aboard the vessel and then began demonstrating their gunfire. Captain Richard Phillips ordered his crew to lock themselves in a secure cabin and gave himself over to captors. While the crew was able to regain control of the vessel and eventually reach its destination, Captain Phillips was taken hostage and placed on a small lifeboat under the control of the pirates. He made one unsuccessful attempt to escape by diving into the water but was pulled back aboard by his captors.

United States warships and a helicopter quickly moved from other locations in the region to the site of the incident, but there was no immediate attempt to rescue Captain Phillips. Negotiators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation were then deployed in an effort to secure the captain's release. Those hostage negotiations with the Somali pirates, however, soon devolved with no agreement being forged. Some reports suggested that the sticking point in the negotiations was the United States' insistence that the the pirates be arrested and brought to justice.

Meanwhile, the White House was tight-lipped about the situation until the dramatic rescue was complete. To that end, President Obama twice gave orders to use force to secure Captain Phillips' release.

According to reports, United States snipers were perched on the navy warship. From their vantage point, they saw a pirate direct a weapon toward Captain Phillips, thus prompting the need for immediate action. The snipers opened fire, killing three of the pirates. The fourth pirate surrendered to the navy forces. With the pirates no longer a threat, navy personnel boarded the lifeboat and discovered Captain Phillips unharmed but bound by ropes.

At a Pentagon briefing in Bahrain, Vice Admiral William Gortney, the head of the United States Naval Central Command explained the need to use force in the rescue saying, "The on-scene [navy] commander determined that the captain was in imminent danger." He continued, "He had a weapon aimed at him - that would be my interpretation of imminent danger."

United States authorities acknowledge that the dramatic rescue could well motivate the targeting of Western vessels in region. To date, such hijackings have been relatively bloodless and aimed at procuring hefty ransoms. But this strong response by the United States, coming on the heels of a similarly dramatic rescue by French military of four French citizens just days before, could well raise the proverbial stakes.

Speaking to this issue, Vice Admiral Gortney warned, " This could escalate violence in this part of the world, no question about it." On the other side of the equation, various media reports indicated that self-identified pirates on the Somali coastal town of Eyl were now identifying the United States navy as their prime enemy target.

Nevertheless, President Obama expressed satisfaction that Captain Phillips had been rescued and hailed the ship's captain for his courage, noting that it was "model for all Americans." President Obama also noted that he intended to directly confront the growing threat of piracy in the unsafe waters off the eastern coast of Africa.

United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held talks with Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, during an African tour in August 2009. The United States' chief diplomat said that her country was interested in a stable Somalia. She also blamed Eritrea for backing Islamist rebels, known as al-Shabab, which has the expressed objective of overthrowing the government of Somalia. To these ends, Secretary of State Clinton said: " Certainly if al-Shabab were to obtain a haven in Somalia which could then attract al-Qaida and other terrorist actions, it would be a threat to the United States." She continued, "It is long past time for Eritrea to cease and desist its support of al-Shabab and to start being a productive rather than a destabilizing neighbor. Accordingly, Secretary of State Clinton warned that the United States would take action against Eritrea if it did not cease its support for the extremist Islamist militants in Somalia. She said: "We are making it very clear that their actions are unacceptable. We intend to take action if they do not cease."

Of course, such action would not include the deployment of United States forces to Somalia to fight the militant insurgents there. However, Agence France Presse reported that the United States

would double its supply of arms and ammunition to Somalia. In this way, the United States was effectively admitting that it has supplied pro-government forces in Somalia with weaponry in recent times.

On the other side of the equation, Eritrea has denied supporting Somalia's al-Shabab militants, and characterized the United States' accusations as a "fabrication."

Nevertheless, there was evidence that several Somali militant Islamist groups carried out their operations from inside Eritrean territory after they were driven by joint government and Ethiopian troops from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006. The history of animosity between Ethiopia and Eritrea indicates that the two countries may have been carrying out a proxy war on Somali territory. While Ethiopia has been reluctant to re-enter the fray as of 2009, Clinton's accusations suggest that the United States believes Eritrea to be playing a continuing role in the chaos that has bedeviled Somalia.

In July 2010, Somalia-based al-Shabab carried out terrorist attacks in the Ugandan capital of Kampala, as discussed above. The Obama administration in the United States pledged help to track down those responsible. As noted above, all available indications at the time of writing suggested that there was Somali-based al-Shabab, with ties to al-Qaida, was responsible for the attacks. In fact, the group itself claimed responsibility for what appeared to be its first terror attack outside Somalia's borders. For its part, the United States Department of States made it clear that it was focused on al-Shabab as a threatening entity with global jihadist aspirations. As well, it pointed to Executive Order 13536, signed by United States President Barack Obama, which was intended to block the finances of militant extremist Islamists in Somalia deemed to be a threat to the peace process in that country.

Also as discussed above, in October 2011, a grenade attack on a nightclub in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi left more than a dozen people wounded. A day later, there was another blast -- this time at a bus terminal in downtown Nairobi. At least one person died as a result of this blast. Suspicion quickly rested on the Somali Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabab, given the timing of recent events. Only a week prior, Kenya deployed troops to Kenya to investigate al-Shabab, which Kenyan authorities blame for a spate of kidnappings in recent times. Al-Shabab warned of reprisal attacks if Kenyan troops did not exit Somalia. Thus, there was speculation that the extremist Islamist terror enclave, which has ties to al-Qaida, may have been making good on that threat. That speculation was bolstered by a warning from the United States embassy in Nairobi, which warned of an "imminent threat" of attacks in Kenya. As discussed above, as of 2012, Kenyan and Ethiopian troops have reportedly entered Somalia to help with the fight against the threat posed by Al-Shabab.

[Special Entry: Foreign Forces Target Al-Shabab](#)

In the autumn of 2011, Kenyan military forces along with allied Somali troops launched an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida. The action was in reaction to the violence and terrorism carried out by militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state.

The assault went on for weeks, included air strikes by Kenyan forces, and yielded a number of deaths. The air assault was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds and a number of apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants. Kenya argued that its action was necessary and that al-Shabab's actions made al-Shabab-controlled areas "legitimate targets." Hundreds of civilians in the conflict zone were fleeing the area to escape the aerial bombardment.

At the start of November 2011, Kenya and Somalia found concurrence on a joint war strategy targeting al-Shabab. The leaders of the two countries -- Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga and Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali agreed on a war strategy to coordinate their assaults on al-Shabab strongholds of Somalia.

Earlier, there had been some rumblings from the Somalian leadership that Kenyan should not have sent troops into its territory to fight al-Shabab, prompting all parties to seek clarification. Now making it clear that the plan was a joint effort and that the Somalian government endorsed Kenya's involvement, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali said in an interview with the media: "There is no discord within the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) leadership. The President of Somalia is aware that I am here to discuss the security operation with the Kenyan government." He continued, "It is necessary for us to have a common strategy against the al-Shabab." For his part, Raila Odinga explained that Kenya was compelled to take action against al-Shabab, saying, "This was a reaction to a situation that was becoming intolerable." He added, "Nobody knows how long and where it was going to end. We want to see a stable civilian authority in Somalia, we want to help Somalia to stabilize."

Raila Odinga and Abdiweli Mohamed Ali urged the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to deploy troops in towns that had been taken over by Kenyan troops. Somali and Kenyan officials had apparently agreed that Somali forces would take charge in the operation. The two leaders also advocated the development of local administrations and infrastructure in newly liberated towns -- presumably to offer fresh opportunities to beleaguered people living in those undeveloped areas, which traditionally are ripe for terrorist recruitment. Furthermore, they called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to immediately investigate the al-Shabab for war crimes. In fact, they said that the TFG of Somalia would immediately seek assistance from the ICC in this effort, with the objective being international indictments for al-Shabab fighters alleged

to be war criminals.

On Nov. 19, 2011, reports emerged about convoys of vehicles carrying Ethiopians troops across the border into Somalia. Eyewitness accounts confirmed the presence of Ethiopian soldiers in various Somali towns. It should be noted that Ethiopian soldiers had operated in Somalia, with the purpose of backing the fragile government of Somalia against the militant Islamist group, al-Shabab, for about three years, before finally withdrawing in 2009.

For their part, Ethiopian authorities denied that their forces were involved in any incursion into Somalia in November 2011, maintaining that their soldiers have not been in Somalia in significant numbers since 2009. Of course, the characterization "in significant numbers" lent some confusion to the situation. That confusion was not helped by the statement made by a Somali member of parliament that the presence of Ethiopian troops was necessary in the fight against al-Shabab.

In the background of the news that Ethiopian troops might be in Somalia was the fact that Kenyan troops were now in Somalia to fight against the threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, since October 2011, Kenyan military forces along with allied Somali troops have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida. The action was in reaction to the violence and terrorism carried out by militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state. Now though, Kenya had joined forces with Somalia to go after al-Shabab. Indeed, by the start of December 2011, Kenya was saying that as many as 40 al-Shabab militants had been killed in a battle in the southern town of Hawo.

At the close of 2011, it was reported that Ethiopian forces had captured the central Somali town of Beledweyne from al-Shabab Islamist militants. Eyewitnesses on the ground observed that both armored vehicles and heavy artillery were used in the assault on al-Shabab militants in Beledweyne. A lengthy battle between about 3,000 Ethiopian troops and al-Shabab fighters followed, ultimately ending in the withdrawal of the Islamic militants from the strategically-located town along the road to Somalia's capital of Mogadishu.

Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali confirmed the news of Beledweyne's capture, saying, "Early this morning, the Somali National Army recaptured some al-Shabab-occupied territories engaging the enemies in Hiiraan and other regions of the country." He said that the operation was aimed at liberating the country from "the tyranny of al-Shabab." Meanwhile, Ethiopian authorities confirmed the involvement of its country's troops, saying that the assault was carried out at the behest of the Somali government. This confirmation reinforced reports a month earlier that convoys of vehicles carrying Ethiopians troops had moved across the border into Somalia.

It should be noted that Ethiopian soldiers had operated in Somalia, with the purpose of backing the fragile government of Somalia against the militant Islamist group, al-Shabab, for about three years, before finally withdrawing in 2009. Now, at the start of 2012, it was apparent that there was the resumption of some military engagement by Ethiopian troops in Somalia once again, with an eye on repelling al-Shabab.

As the year 2012 began, Ethiopian and Kenyan troops continued to operate in Somalia. The forces from Ethiopia and Kenya were carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia, which has increasingly operated as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida.

In the first week of January 2012, the Kenyan army announced that it had eliminated 60 Somali al-Shabab militia fighters in air strikes in Garbaharey in southern Somalia's Gedo region. Kenyan authorities also said that their forces were determined to "break their [al-Shabab's] spine completely." Despite a number of defections from al-Shabab fighters, the power base of the Islamist extremist movement said that it would repel the Kenyan troops.

As January 2012 entered its final week, African Union (AU) forces launched a major offensive against al-Shabab Islamists in Somalia. The operation targeted the Somali capital of Mogadishu and aimed to seize territory from al-Shabab. To that end, about one thousand AU troops were able to capture three al-Shabab bases and were advancing on Mogadishu. Pro-government forces were reported to have taken control of both Mogadishu University and Barakat cemetery, as AU forces advanced northward following a period of heavy fighting. Nevertheless, on Jan. 19, 2012, a suicide attack at a refugee camp in the capital left several people dead, including a security guard and a local aid worker.

On Feb. 18, 2012, Kenya's military said that it made further advances in an effort to quell al-Shabab. Specifically, Kenya's Defense Forces said that it liberated a total of 95,000 square kilometers of Southern Somalia from the al-Shabab. Accordingly, its operation could well be described as something of a success.

Since the autumn of 2011, as discussed here, Kenyan military forces, along with allied Somali troops, have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist enclave based in Somalia. The action was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds, apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants; the action was motivated by the regime of violence being carried out by the militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries.

It should be noted that although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from the Somali capital of Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area.

That being said, al-Shabab has been under intensifying pressure from a number of fronts. In addition to the troops from Kenya, there have also been African Union troops operating in Somalia to offer support to government forces, as well as troops from Ethiopia and most recently Djibouti additionally working in Somalia towards the same goal of repelling al-Shabab. Of course, the presence of foreign troops in Somalia could prove to be a controversial matter, even contributing to further instability in a country that can only be classified as a failed state. Indeed, al-Shabab declared that the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia was to be regarded as an act of war. Moreover, as of February 2012, as discussed below, al-Shabab went from operating as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida, to officially joined the ranks of al-Shabab.

Special Entry: Al-Shabab Officially Joins Jihadist Terror Network

On Feb. 10, 2012, al-Shabab of Somalia -- the extremist Islamist militant group -- officially joined the terror enclave al-Qaida. The two groups posted a joint video formalizing the merger on the Internet.

In that video, al-Shabab's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane (also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair) promised that his group's militants would be "faithful soldiers" for al Qaida. He said, "In the name of my mujahedeen brothers, leaders and soldiers...I pledge obedience." He continued, "Lead us on the road of jihad and martyrdom, in the footsteps that our martyr Osama bin Laden had drawn for us." The al-Shabab leader was followed in the video by Ayman Al Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaida, announced the "good news" of al-Shabab's decision to join the global Jihadist movement -- a move he said would undoubtedly "annoy the crusaders."

It should be noted that although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area. In fact, al-Shabab has been functioning as a de facto ally of al-Qaida, in recent years. Indeed, al-Shabab has acted as something of a proxy for al-Qaida, even expanding its terrorist activities beyond Somali borders as it moved in a Jihadist direction. Notably, al-Shabab was responsible for deadly bombings in Uganda, and it was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state. This announcement of al-Shabab joining al-Qaida, therefore, merely officialized al-Shabab's identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa, now subsumed under the al-Qaida rubric.

That being said, al-Shabab has been under pressure since late 2011 and into 2012 as a result of strategic offensives by Somali troops backed by African Union forces, as well as incursions by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops, aimed at quelling the effects of al-Shabab in the strategic Horn of Africa. See above for details as regards the efforts of foreign forces in Somalia and the fight to

quell al-Shabab.

Editor's Note:

Somalia has had no real central government since 1991. Indeed, Somalia has lacked any internationally-recognized central government since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. In recent years, despite the establishment of a fragile transitional government, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords. Islamic militias have also held sway and were driven from the capital in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government.

Since that time, resurgent Islamists, known as al-Shabab, have been launching a violent insurgency and now control significant swaths of the country's territory. A ceasefire pact between the government and insurgent forces in June 2008 has had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal. Indeed, in 2010, al-Shabab -- which is allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying out terrorist acts outside national borders. Al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

In August 2011, al-Shabab forces were said to be withdrawing from the capital city of Mogadishu; however, that exit did not augur an end to violence and terrorism as indicated by the October 2011 attack on the Mogadishu government compound. That being said, an offensive by Somali government forces, aided by African Union troops and incursions from neighboring Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, have been placing hitherto unknown pressure on al-Shabab. As of 2012, al-Shabab announced it was joining al-Qaida, effectively formalizing its identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa. The group has continued its brutal assault in Somalia, attacking a high level national delegation as recently as April 2012. Amidst this state of insecurity, Somalia has, as of 2012, advanced a political transition plan.

From the start of the insurgency in 2007, although no official figures are available, estimates suggest that tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been made homeless by the fighting in Mogadishu. As people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, there are now as many as one million people are internal refugees in Somalia. With the state of lawlessness increasing in Somalia, a dire security situation plaguing the country, and the mass scale of population displacement, the United Nations warned that half the entire Somali population has been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. As of 2012, the situation can be

characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

It should be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland---consisting of five districts in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Special Entry: Swedish politician attacked in Somalia

On Aug. 21, 2013, a Swedish politician was attacked in Mogadishu -- the capital city of Somalia. Gunmen fired at the vehicle transporting Ann-Margarethe Livh, wounding the Swedish politician, and killing two others. The incident occurred as Livh -- the leader of Sweden's Left Party in Stockholm -- and the two other victims, a Somali translator and a police officer -- were returning to her hotel following her delivery of a lecture on democracy at a university in Mogadishu. The shocking act of violence against a prominent foreign national was expected to add to the fears that Somalia was slipping back into a failed state marked by lawlessness and chaos, and with Mogadishu regaining its dubious distinction as a battleground between weak government forces and Islamic extremist militants. Indeed, the alarming increase in violence resulted in the decision by Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) to close its operations in Somalia due to "extreme attacks on its staff."

Al-Shabab terrorists from Somalia launch brutal attack at Kenyan shopping mall

Gunmen from the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab, launched an audacious attack on a popular shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi on Sept. 21, 2013. The attack began with the al-Shaba extremist Islamist terrorists storming the upscale Westgate mall compound, hurling grenades, and opening fire on customers and mall staff with automatic weapons.

Two days later on Sept. 23, 2013, the attack continued with around 70 people reported to have been killed, more than 175 wounded, as many as 50 people unaccounted for. Also, scores of people were believed to be held either as hostages or trapped in the mall and unable to escape. Meanwhile, a standoff was ensuing between the terrorists and Kenyan security forces.

There were unconfirmed reports that the attackers included at least one woman. At the same time, according to witness accounts, the attackers were clearly targeting non-Muslims. Survivor accounts indicated that the terrorists asked Muslims to identify themselves and they were then allowed to leave. According to a witness account recorded by a correspondent for the Economist, an Indian man who claimed to be Muslim (presumably for reasons of survival) was shot to death

when he could not provide the correct answer to a question regarding the Islamic Prophet Muhammed's mother.

Also among the dead were Kenyan, Ghanaian, South African, French, Dutch, British, Canadian, American, Peruvian, Australian, Indian, and Chinese victims. The Ghanaian victim was reported to be the well-known poet, Kofi Awoonor, who was in Kenya to attend a literary festival. Of the Canadian victims, one of the dead was reported to be a diplomat. The wife of an American working for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was also reported to have been killed. Because the mall was the venue for a gathering of children on that day, children were reported to have died in the attack which British Prime Minister David Cameron characterized as "an act of appalling brutality."

In a televised address, President Uhuru Kenyatta said that security forces were "in the process of neutralizing the attackers and securing the mall," however, it was apparent that despite the president's claim, that goal was not going to be accomplished with ease. Indeed, the safety of the hostages required that security experts use caution and delicacy to end the siege. Still, the Kenyan leader had a warning for the al-Shabab terrorists, saying, "We shall hunt down the perpetrators wherever they run to. We shall get to them and we shall punish them for this heinous crime." President Kenyatta certainly had a personal stake in the matter as he confirmed that his own family members had been killed in the attack.

There were efforts afoot to deal with the ensuing siege at the shopping mall, with Kenyan special forces being called in to support police in this effort. As well, Israeli deployed some of its anti-terrorism experts to help Kenyan authorities while the international police organization, Interpol, had offered to deploy an Incident Response Team consisting of specialized forensic officers, anti-terror experts, to Kenya. Further forensic experts were being sent to assist the Kenyans from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada to examine DNA, fingerprints, and ballistic evidence.

Al-Shabab, which aligned itself with the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida, wasted no time in claiming responsibility for the deadly attack, explaining that its actions were in retaliation for the Kenyan's military involvement in Somalia.

Since the autumn of 2011, Kenyan military forces, along with allied Somali troops, have been carrying out an offensive against al-Shabab. The action was aimed at eliminating al-Shabab strongholds, apparent Islamist terrorist training camps, as well as stopping the transfer of arms to al-Shabab militants; the action was motivated by the regime of violence being carried out by the militant terror group not only in Somalia but in other countries. Indeed, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, in response to Kenya's involvement in Somalia, under the aegis of the African Union mission. That mission was itself aimed at stabilizing Somalia.

Although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from the Somali capital of Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area. The terrorist agenda of al-Shabab was extroverted in 2012 when the extremist Islamist entity went from operating as a proxy terror group for al-Qaida, to officially joining the ranks of the world's most notorious terror enclave.

Al-Shabab has been under intensifying pressure from a number of fronts. In addition to the troops from Kenya, there have also been African Union troops operating in Somalia to offer support to government forces, as well as troops from Ethiopia and most recently Djibouti additionally working in Somalia towards the same goal of repelling al-Shabab. The presence of foreign troops in Somalia could prove to be a controversial matter, even contributing to further instability in a country that can only be classified as a failed state. Indeed, al-Shabab declared that the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia was to be regarded as an act of war -- with the September 2013 assault on the Nairobi shopping mall being the latest apparent battle in the war.

Note that as of Sept. 24, 2013 -- three days after the start of the tragic assault -- Kenyan authorities were able to report that they were in control of all areas of the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. But that claim was regarded with doubt as explosions and gunfire continued to be heard emanating from the shopping complex, and as flames were seen coming from the mall. Kenyan Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku said that Kenyan special forces were carrying out an operation intended to end the siege, saying, "The terrorists could be running and hiding in some stores, but all floors now are under our control." He continued, "There is no room for escape."

A day later on Sept. 25, 2013, President Kenyatta announced that the crisis was over and promised again that the assailants would be brought to justice. To that end, about a dozen suspects were said to be arrested on the grounds that they were somehow involved in the attack. Seven people were arrested at the airport in Nairobi and being subject to interrogations. It should be noted that Kenyan authorities confirmed that a woman was among the al-Shabab assailants; she was reported to be a national of the United Kingdom. Also among the assailants were two United States nationals, who were described to be of about 19 years old and of either Arab or Somali origin. The International Criminal Court entered the fray saying that it would work with Kenya to ensure the terrorists responsible for the bloodshed and violence would face justice.

In the waning days of September 2013, a number of suspects being held in connection with the terror attack at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. As well, there were reports that both Kenyan and Western authorities were trying to apprehend a United Kingdom national -- Samantha Lewthwaite -- known as the "white widow" due to the fact that she was the wife of one of the 2005 London suicide bombers. It was not known if Lewthwaite was being sought in connection with the Kenyan mall attack or in connection to a previous al-Shabab plot dating back to 2011.

Around the same time, there were reports that Kenyan government ministers received warnings of an impending terror attack ahead of the Westgate shopping mall massacre. Kenyan newspapers reported that the National Intelligence Service was warned of the presence of suspected al-Shabab militants in Nairobi more than a year prior, and that those militants were planning to carry out acts of terrorism. In fact, Kenya's Daily Nation reported that ministers were given security briefings "informing them of increasing threat of terrorism and of plans to launch simultaneous attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa around September 13 and 20, 2013." The Daily Nation also noted that Kenyan intelligence had actually pinpointed both the Westgate shopping mall and the Holy Family Basilica as likely targets.

With this news emerging and accusations arising about the government's lack of attentiveness to such precise threats, the Kenyan government was clearly under fire. On Sept. 29, 2013, Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku was asked to address these concerns during a news conference; however, he declined to comment, saying instead that intelligence issues were confidential.

As September 2013 drew to a close, the terror group, al-Shabab warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. But there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Indeed, there were reports of Kenyan forces gathering close to the Somali border, in anticipation of a peacekeeping rotation into Somalia. As well, President Uhuru Kenyatta has made it clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). This attack in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab.

Special Note on U.S. special forces operation in Somalia

In October 2013, United States special forces raided terrorist enclaves in Somalia. This operation targeted the Somali town of Barawe. There, commandos were targeting a "high value" terrorist from al-Shabab -- the Somali terror group that is allied with al-Qaida. Because al-Shabab fighters responded with heavy fire, United States commandos chose to retreat from the scene although there was some suggestion that one al-Shabab terrorist was killed. It was not known if the person killed was Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, also known as Ahmed Godane -- the leader of al-Shabab. It was later revealed that the target of that action was Abdukadir Mohamed Abdukadir, a Kenyan al-Shabab commander also known by the name "Ikrima." It should be noted that the al-Shabab, which is aligned with the terror enclave al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, discussed above.

Somali terror group al-Shabab suspected of attacks in Kenya

In the early summer of 2014, a spate of attacks in Kenya were believed to be the work of the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab. The latest attack in July 2014 hit the resort coastal of region of Lamu and left dozens of people dead.

Going back to May 2014, two explosions rocked the Kenyan capital of Nairobi killing several people and injuring scores more. The two blasts targeted passengers buses on a busy highway and appeared to have been caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) commonly used by Jihadist terrorists. Around the same period of in May 2014, the area of Kasarani to the northeast of Nairobi was also struck by violence, as two other blasts targeted a hotel and an underpass. Scores of casualties were reported in those cases, with Kenyan authorities noting that 20 of the injuries were deemed critical. Blame rested on the Somalia-based Islamist extremist entity, al-Shabab.

In mid-June 2014, Kenya's coastal area of Mpeketoni was struck by deadly violence -- quite likely at the hands of the Somalia-based extremist Islamist group, al-Shabab. The horrific wave of violence that rocked the coast of Kenya close to the resort island of Lamu ensued over the course of two days and left as many as 60 dead. A police station, a number of hotels, and neighboring villages, were among the targets struck by ongoing raids by gunmen. Many of the victims were watching World Cup matches at the time of the attacks. It should be noted that extremist Islamists have deemed the act of watching football matches to be "un-Islamic." As a result, Kenyan authorities urged citizens to remain at home to watch the 2014 World Cup, rather than gathering in public places.

Meanwhile, al-Shabab wasted no time in claiming responsibility as it declared the attacks were carried out in retaliation for Kenyan troops in Somalia as part of a force to repel Islamist extremists.

President Uhuru Kenyatta took the perplexing path of denying al-Shabab's claim of responsibility and instead claiming that local political groups were responsible for the violence. He took note of the fact that most of the victims were ethnic Kikuyus -- of the same ethnicity as him. However, the truth of the matter was that with most of the victims being non-Muslims, it was conceivable that al-Shabab was behind the bloodshed.

Regardless of the competing claims as to the actual assailants, several people were arrested a few days after the attacks. Via Twitter, the local police chief, David Kimaiyo, said: "We have arrested several suspects in connection to Mpeketoni incident including the owner and driver of one the vehicles used by attackers." He also tweeted: "Also in police custody is a suspect who was operating social media accounts purportedly used by al-Shabab to claim responsibility."

The Kenyan coast was again the site of bloodshed in the last week of June 2014 when a gang

armed with machetes raided the village of Witu, located in close proximity to Mpeketoni. The attack resulted in the hacking deaths of five people. As was the case in the previous coastal attack, the identity of the assailants remained hazy. Blame, as usual, rested on al-Shabab; however, the president continued to insist that recent attacks were the work of political rivals.

In the second week of July 2014, the coastal resort region of Lamu was again hit by violence when armed men raided a trading center, attacked a police station, and burned down homes. As many as 30 people were killed as a result of the brutal assault. Most of the victims were reported to be adult men. Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the bloodshed and made it clear that its main target for attack outside of Somalia was Kenya.

It should be noted that al-Shabab, which is aligned with the terror enclave al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, these bombings in 2014 were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat.

That being said, there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has made it clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). These various attacks in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, at the close of June 2014, Kenya intensified its air strikes on the Islamist extremist groups bases in Somalia.

U.S. strike kills leader of al-Shabab terrorist group; African peacekeeping forces make gains

Joint African peacekeeping and Somali forces were making gains against Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabaab, in the southern town of Bulamareer, located close to the Islamist terrorists' stronghold of Barawe. The joint operation also saw success by recapturing territory in the surrounding areas of the Lower Shabelle region.

The effort in late August 2014 in Bulamareer -- about 50 miles to the north of Barawe -- and the surrounding region was part of an overall operation that started earlier in 2014 and had been aimed at repelling al-Shabab from towns where they have held sway. Of particular concern had been the southern part of the country, which was largely been under al-Shabab's control.

In recent times, al-Shabab has transformed from being a Somalia-focused Islamic insurgency into an extremist Jihadist entity that carries out brutal terrorist attacks both at home and in neighboring

countries. While international forces operating in Somalia have placed pressure on al-Shabab, it has aligned itself with al-Qaida, taken advantage of Somalia's weak government, and relentlessly worked to destabilize Somalia the Horn of Africa.

At the start of September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft. Days after the United States Pentagon confirmed the operation, Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby confirmed that the primary target -- Godane -- had been successfully eliminated in the strikes on an encampment and convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu.

For several years, Godane -- also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair -- has stood near the top of the United States Department of State's most wanted list. He was radicalized in Sudan and Pakistan, and reportedly fought in Afghanistan, before becoming the al-Shabab's leader in 2008. A year later, he officially announced al-Shabab's alliance and allegiance to the notorious terror enclave, al-Qaida. In 2012, the United States placed a \$7 million bounty on his head. In recent years, al-Shabab's activities have expanded beyond Somalia's borders to neighboring countries with an increasingly Islamist Jihadist agenda. Of note was the horrific terror attack at a Kenyan shopping mall in 2013.

While the United States has not been known to be actively involved in operations in Somalia, it has nonetheless supported African Union forces tasked with repelling al-Shabab from Mogadishu. As well, the United States has gone after high value al-Shabab targets in Somalia before. To that end, in October 2013, United States special forces raided terrorist enclaves in Somalia, with the objective of going after a "high value" terrorist from al-Shabab. Because al-Shabab fighters responded with heavy fire, United States commandos chose to retreat from the scene although there was some suggestion that one al-Shabab terrorist was killed. It was later revealed that the target of that action was Abdukadir Mohamed Abdukadir, a Kenyan al-Shabab commander also known by the name "Ikrima."

Now, in September 2014, the United States could claim victory for eliminating one of the world's most important terrorists, and specifically, the leader of al-Shabab -- Godane. In this way, the successful strike operation struck a heavy blow to the al-Shabab terror group, which did not have an obvious successor to Godane.

In Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed used the opportunity to urge al-Shabab to lay down arms. He announced a 45-day amnesty for terrorists aligned with the group to renounce their association in al-Shabab. It was to be seen if al-Shabab would respond affirmatively to the offer, or simply regroup and re-emerge once again.

Somali-based Islamist terror group al-Shabab carries out brutal attacks in Kenya; targets non-

Muslims in massacre

In late 2014, the Somali-based terror group al-Shabab carried out a series of attacks just outside the town of Mandera, close to Kenya's border with Somalia and Ethiopia. In these brutal massacres, al-Shabab clearly targeted Kenyan non-Muslims for execution.

In the first attack that occurred at the end of November 2014, the al-Shabab terrorists targeted a bus bound for Nairobi. They ambushed the vehicle, ordered passengers off the bus at gunpoint and killed all non-Muslims at close range. Three passengers survived by reciting verses of the Koran and presumably proving their Islamic "credentials."

In a statement, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, an al-Shabab spokesperson, said, "The Mujahideen successfully carried out an operation near Mandera early this morning, which resulted in 28 crusaders perishing, as revenge for the crimes committed by the Kenyan crusaders against our Muslim brethren in Mombasa." At issue were a series of raids by police on mosques in the city of Mombasa, which were identified as terrorist recruiting venues and safe havens for storing weapons.

For their part, Kenyan authorities made clear that their armed forces would be carrying out an offensive against camps and strongholds believed to be frequented by al-Shabab. Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto promised retribution and justice, saying in a televised address: "I want to assure you all that all those responsible for the loss of lives of Kenyans -- we will pursue you everywhere, be it in Kenya, be it in Somalia."

But only days later on Dec. 2, 2014, al-Shabab carried out its second brutal attack in only days -- this time targeting non-Muslims at a quarry in Kormey -- close to the same town of Mandera mentioned above. Following a similar pattern as before, the al-Shabab terrorists rounded up the workers while they were sleeping in their tents, singled out 36 Christian quarry workers, lined them up for mass execution, and then shot them to death. Four victims were said to have been beheaded in what could only be understood as a massacre. Muslim quarry workers were allowed to live.

Once again, al-Shabab made clear that it was responsible for these acts of barbarism, justifying the group's brutality on the basis of Kenya's military engagement as part of a multilateral coalition fighting al-Shabab in Somalia. Al-Shabab spokesperson Ali Mohamud Rage declared, "We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression."

It should be noted that al-Shabab began as an Islamist entity battling the weak government of Somalia; it has since aligned with al-Qaida and other notorious Islamist extremist terrorism enclaves. Moreover, al-Shabab has expanded its goals, transforming itself from a national militant

group to more of a terrorist entity with Jihadist ambitions as it has increasingly launched attacks outside of Somalia. Kenya is a favored target for al-Shabab due to that country's involvement in a multilateral military effort to rout out al-Shabab from the Horn of Africa.

Indeed, al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, the relentless and ongoing attacks in 2014 were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat. As discussed here, the close of the year 2014 was being marked in Kenya by continuing bloodshed and brutality at the hands of al-Shabab, who seemed intent on punishing Kenya for its military effort against Islamic terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

That being said, there was no sign that Kenya intended to bend to the will of terrorists. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has throughout made clear that Kenya will not withdraw from Somalia, where its military forces have been involved in a relatively successful African Union effort to force al-Shabab into a state of retreat from Mogadishu (Somalia's capital). These various attacks in Kenya likely only served to strengthen the commitment of regional and international bodies to dismantling and eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab. Indeed, since mid-2014, Kenya has intensified its air strikes on the Islamist extremist group's bases in Somalia.

With the brutal massacres in Kenya in late 2014 at the hands of al-Shabab, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta moved to make sweeping changes as regards his national security team. Faced with growing criticism over the government's failure to do more to protect Kenyans from attacks from al-Shabab, President Kenyatta on Dec. 2, 2014, sacked the police chief, David Kimaiyo. He also fired Interior Minister Joseph ole Lenku who managed to retain his post even after the 2013 al-Shabab attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall discussed above. With these moves made, President Kenyatta urged his opposition critics to shift their attention to national unity, saying, "Our bickering only emboldens the enemy."

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Johnson warns of threat to Western shopping centers by al-Shabab

On Feb. 22, 2015, United States Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson issued a warning to Westerners regarding possible attacks on shopping centers by the Somalia-based terror group, al-Shabab. At issue was the emergence of a videotaped message from al-Shabab urging its supporters to carry out attacks at shopping malls in the United States, Canada, and the United States. An al-Sahab terrorist with a British accent specifically mentioned three large shopping malls -- the Mall of America in Minnesota, the West Edmonton Mall in Canada, and Oxford Street in London -- as desirable targets of attack.

Of significance was the fact that al-Shabab had already carried out a horrific and brutal massacre at the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013, killing close to 70 people. Given this record of bloodthirsty violence, the United States homeland security chief was taking this new threat from al-Shabab seriously. In an interview with CNN, Secretary Johnson said, "Anytime a terrorist organisation calls for an attack on a specific place, we've got to take that seriously." He further noted that there was a "new phase" of terrorism looming in which attacks would increasingly come from "independent actors in their homelands."

Somali-based Islamist terror group al-Shabab launches violent attack on Kenyan university

In late March 2015, the Islamist terror group, al-Shabab, carried out a suicide car bomb attack outside a Mogadishu hotel. The attack took place at the Maka al Mukarama hotel in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, which was popular with diplomats, dignitaries, and business people. After the initial assault, al-Shabab then raided the hotel, killing more than a dozen people and wounding at least 30 others. Included in the dead was the Somali ambassador to Switzerland, Yusuf Baribari, as well as several other government officials. Some diplomats survived the raid by jumping from hotel windows. The siege ended only after United States-trained Somali troops stormed the hotel. Militants as well as soldiers were killed in the ensuing clashes. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the act of terrorism, with a spokesperson for the Islamist terror group saying, "We don't consider it to be a hotel - it's a government base."

At the start of April 2015, al-Shabab, launched a violent terror attack at a university in northeastern Kenya, relatively close to the border with Somalia. Terrorists from al-Shabab stormed the Garissa College University, opening fire, and targeting non-Muslims. At least 145 people were killed while scores more were wounded. The terrorists identified Muslim students and released them, preferring to target the Christian students instead.

It should be noted that the Somali-based terror group has made Kenya a favorite terror target, justifying its brutality on the basis of Kenya's military engagement as part of a multilateral coalition fighting al-Shabab in Somalia. Al-Shabab spokesperson Ali Mohamud Rage was on the record, as he declared, "We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression."

It should also be noted that al-Shabab began as an Islamist entity battling the weak government of Somalia; it has since aligned with al-Qaida and other notorious Islamist extremist terrorism enclaves. Moreover, al-Shabab has expanded its goals, transforming itself from a national militant group to more of a terrorist entity with Jihadist ambitions as it has increasingly launched attacks outside of Somalia. Kenya has thus become a preferred target for al-Shabab due to that country's

involvement in a multilateral military effort to rout out al-Shabab from the Horn of Africa.

Significantly, al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the horrific terrorist attack on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in 2013 that left scores of victims dead. At the time, the terror group warned that the Kenyan mall attack was "act one" or "just the premier" in its agenda to force Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Clearly, the relentless and ongoing attacks in 2014 and 2015 in Kenya close to the border with Somalia were signs that al-Shabab was making good on its nefarious threat, while also making it clear that the entire border region was vulnerable to terrorism.

Note that on April 6, 2015, Kenya launched air strikes on terror training bases in Somalia. Kenyan military authorities made a point of noting that the air strikes were not being carried out in retaliation to the Garissa massacre, but were simply the latest phase of ongoing operations against al-Shabab in Somalia that commenced as an Africa Union mission in 2011. In an interview with BBC News, a Kenyan military spokesperson, David Obonyo, said, "The bombings are part of the continued process and engagement against al-Shabab, which will go on."

For its part, al-Shabab was basking in its latest successful operation in barbarism. Reiterating that Kenya was in its crosshairs for the long haul, the Somali Islamist terror group declared a "long, gruesome war" against Kenya.

Terror group al-Shabab carries out attacks in Kenya and Somalia

Kenya has been under an enduring terror threat from the Somalia-based Islamist terror group, al-Shabab for several years. The latest manifestation of violence at the hands of al-Shabab in Kenya occurred in the first week of July 2015, when Islamist terrorists from al-Shabab carried out an attack at a military camp in Madera county of Kenya close to the border with Somalia. The assailants appeared to have detonated explosives before opening fire in the middle of the night. As many as 14 people were killed as a result, with several more individuals being injured. The victims were believed to be workers from a nearby quarry. Somalia-based al-Shabab wasted little time in claiming responsibility for the bloodshed. Manderu was a prime spot for al-Shabab given the fact that the terror group carried out an attack at a quarry in the area in late 2014, killing dozens of quarry workers in that attack.

More recently, in April 2015, al-Shabab terrorists carried out a massacre at the Garissa University in northeastern Kenya yielding a massive death toll. The massacre was the worst single terror attack by al-Shabab on Kenyan territory. It marked the latest act of brutality by the Islamist terror group against Kenya, which was participating in a joint regional operation aimed at eradicating the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabab in the region. Al-Shabab's other notorious terror attack on Kenyan soil took place in 2013 when the terror group carried out a brazen and brutal assault on the

Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi killing dozens of people.

Meanwhile, al-Shabab remained active at home in Somalia. On July 10, 2015, the terror group launched an attack at the Wehliya Hotel in Mogadishu, killing at least six civilians. Somali authorities said that one assailant used a car bombing to commence the attack at the gate of the hotel, leading to the deaths of the victims. Somali security forces responded and three terrorists were killed in the ensuing melee. There were reports of a second attack and ensuing siege at a second hotel in Mogadishu on the same day.

The attacks made clear that despite a regional effort to vanquish the terror group, al-Shabab remained a menace not only at home in Somalia, but also across the border in Kenya. In fact, al-Shabab was continuing its campaign of aggression against Kenya in retaliation for that country's involvement in the regional anti-Shabab effort.

Editor's Note:

Somalia has had no real central government since 1991. Indeed, Somalia has lacked any internationally-recognized central government since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. In recent years, despite the establishment of a fragile transitional government, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords and Islamic militias.

In its heyday, the al-Shabab Islamic militia held sway in the early 2000s in Somalia, but was driven from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government of Somalia. Since that time, resurgent al-Shabab Islamists have been launching a violent insurgency. A ceasefire pact between the Somali government and al-Shabab in 2008 had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal.

From the start of the fresh insurgency, although no official figures are available, estimates suggest that tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands have been made homeless by the fighting in Mogadishu. As people have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety, there are now as many as one million people who are internal refugees in Somalia. With the state of lawlessness increasing in Somalia, a dire security situation plaguing the country, and the mass scale of population displacement, the United Nations warned that half the entire Somali population has been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. In more recent years, the situation can be characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

In 2010, al-Shabab -- which was at that point allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying

out terrorist acts outside national borders. Indeed, al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, thus indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya around the same period in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

In August 2011, al-Shabab forces were said to be withdrawing from the capital city of Mogadishu; however, that exit did not augur an end to violence and terrorism as exemplified by the October 2011 attack on the Mogadishu government compound. That being said, an offensive by Somali government forces, aided by African Union troops and incursions from neighboring Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, placed hitherto unknown pressure on al-Shabab.

In 2012, al-Shabab announced it was officially joining al-Qaida, and effectively formalized its identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa. The group then continued its brutal assault in Somalia, attacking a high level national delegation as recently as the spring of 2012, and carrying out attacks in Mogadishu 2013.

In 2013, al-Shabab burnished its terrorist Jihadist credentials by carrying out a brazen and brutal assault on the Westgate shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, killing dozens of victims. Al-Shabab proudly claimed responsibility for the shocking rampage of horror and bloodshed and promised that the Westgate massacre was just the "opening act" in campaign that was intended to go on and on, as the militant Islamist terror group sought to punish Kenya for its involvement in the regional military operation against al-Shabab. Indeed, al-Shabab was intent on extending its reach and carrying out retaliatory attacks on Kenya because of its military involvement in Somalia as part of the African Union mission.

In September 2014, the United States carried out air strikes in Somalia targeting the leader of al-Shabab, Ahmed Abdi Godane. The operation used both manned and unmanned aircraft to strike an encampment and a convoy of vehicles to the south of Mogadishu, successfully eliminating Godane. But even the death of Godane did not bring an end to al-Shabab's brutality and barbarism.

In late 2014, al-Shabab remained active with the terror group's Jihadist inclinations manifest fully in the form of continuing attacks that targeted Kenya. Most of the 2014 attacks occurred in towns close to the border with Somalia and appeared to target non-Muslims, with Christians being the favored target for death.

In 2015, al-Shabab was extending its Jihadist ambitions with a call for supporters to carry out terror attacks at popular shopping malls in the West. In fact, al-Shabab was urging sympathizers and allies to launch mall attacks reminiscent of its own Westgate massacre in Kenya to be carried out in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. But before such an end could take place,

in the spring of 2015, Kenya was targeted again by al-Shabab, with more than 145 people dying at Garissa University at the hands of al-Shabab terrorists. While Kenya vowed a strong response, it was apparent that al-Shabab continued to function and to carry out brutal terror cross-border attacks with relative impunity, even declaring a "long and gruesome" war against Kenya. As the year 2015 continued, al-Shabab made good on its threats as it continued to carry out attacks on Kenyan soil in the border area with Somalia.

It should also be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland---consisting of five districts in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief at CountryWatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

National Security

External Threats

The Ethiopian government has taken measures to inhibit a return to normalcy in Somalia, plagued by infighting since the last permanent government there, the Siad Barre regime, fell in 1991. Its actions are partially rooted in a history of tense relations between the two countries. The belief that ethnic affiliations entitled Somalia to sovereignty over Ethiopian held lands and the opportunity that Ethiopia's state of internal disarray presented prompted Somali forces to invade in 1977. Within a year they had been repelled. Enmity on both sides of the border clearly lingers, however. Somalia plays host to a terrorist organization, Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI), that was initially formed in the early 1990s with the joint mandate of creating an Islamic government in Somalia and fostering the secession of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (see section below on terrorism). Ethiopia's government has used the threat of AIAI to justify military incursions into Somalia. Likewise, Ethiopia defiantly moved to establish alliances with Somali clans that opposed the authority of the Transitional National Government, whose three-year mandate expired in August 2003, as well as with the government of the breakaway Republic of Somaliland(see section below on insurgencies). See "Political Conditions" and "Foreign Relations" for further details on the relationship between

Somalia and Ethiopia.

Crime

In the absence of a strong central authority in Somalia, criminal activity is rampant. With the exception of Somaliland, where relative stability is enjoyed by inhabitants, crime is an extension of the general instability in the region. Violent crimes are fairly common, and kidnapping and robbery are becoming serious issues in the south.

Insurgencies

Somalia has suffered from rampant internal strife since its last permanent authority, the Siad Barre regime, was ousted in 1991. Elements within Somalia have managed to carve out two semi-autonomous regions in the north, the Republic of Somaliland and Puntland. Generally stable conditions have prevailed in Somaliland since its 1991 inception, though the U.S. Department of State reports several fatal attacks against foreign relief workers there. Its government claims to represent an independent state; however, the international community has not recognized it as such. Likewise, Puntland has enjoyed comparatively stable conditions, outside of an outbreak of political violence there in 2002. Puntland's government does not claim to represent a sovereign nation, nor does it seek international recognition. Instead, it merely asserts a right to maintain Puntland's semi-autonomous status.

Outside of Somaliland and Puntland, an ongoing power struggle has engulfed most of the rest of Somalia. Various factions continue to fight for control of Mogadishu and southern regions of the country. Furthermore, in the absence of a strong central authority, Somalia has become a haven for terrorist organizations (see below section on terrorism). Likewise, criminal organizations have also been allowed to flourish there.

See "Political Conditions" for information related to the extremist Islamist enclave, al-Shabab, which is allied with the terror enclave, al-Qaida, and has, in more recent years, been deemed responsible for ongoing instability and bloody violence within already-lawless Somalia, as well as a spate of terror attacks on foreign soil.

Terrorism

In the absence of a strong central authority, Somalia has become a haven for terrorist organizations. The Somali insurgents who shot down two American Black Hawk helicopters in 1993 likely received training from foreign terrorist organizations, namely al-Qaida. In its annual World Factbook, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency reported as of July 2005 a probable link between

elements in Somalia and global terrorist networks.

In addition to foreign elements, Somalia also hosts domestic terrorist organizations.

Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI) was formed in the early 1990s with the joint mandate of creating an Islamic government in Somalia and fostering the secession of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. AIAI is allegedly responsible for a series of bombings that took place in 1996 and 1997 in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, as well as the 1998 kidnapping of several relief workers. The Ethiopian military has significantly diminished AIAI's operational capacity. As of the end of 2005, the organization's membership was estimated to be 2,000, only a small percentage of which was militant. Most of these members operate in small groups or cells. AIAI continues to pose a danger to Somalia and the greater region, however, particularly in light of its reported ties to the al-Qaida network.

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Somalia is currently party to none of the international conventions and protocols pertaining to terrorism.

Special Entry: Al-Shabab Officially Joins Jihadist Terror Network

On Feb. 10, 2012, al-Shabab of Somalia -- the extremist Islamist militant group -- officially joined the terror enclave al-Qaida. The two groups posted a joint video formalizing the merger on the Internet.

In that video, al-Shabab's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane (also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair) promised that his group's militants would be "faithful soldiers" for al Qaida. He said, "In the name of my mujahedeen brothers, leaders and soldiers...I pledge obedience." He continued, "Lead us on the road of jihad and martyrdom, in the footsteps that our martyr Osama bin Laden had drawn for us." The al-Shabab leader was followed in the video by Ayman Al Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaida, announced the "good news" of al-Shabab's decision to join the global Jihadist movement -- a move he said would undoubtedly "annoy the crusaders."

It should be noted that although al-Shabab made a strategic exit from Mogadishu months prior, it still held sway over large swaths of Somalia and had shifted its focus to carrying out terrorist attacks, rather than more conventional warfare, in the Mogadishu area. In fact, al-Shabab has been functioning as a de facto ally of al-Qaida, in recent years. Indeed, al-Shabab has acted as

something of a proxy for al-Qaida, even expanding its terrorist activities beyond Somali borders as it moved in a Jihadist direction. Notably, al-Shabab was responsible for deadly bombings in Uganda, and it was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya in recent times, seemingly in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia aimed at stabilizing the failed state. This announcement of al-Shabab joining al-Qaida, therefore, merely officialized al-Shabab's identity as a standpoint Islamist terror group in the strategic Horn of Africa, now subsumed under the al-Qaida rubric.

That being said, al-Shabab has been under pressure since late 2011 and into 2012 as a result of strategic offensives by Somali troops backed by African Union forces, as well as incursions by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops, aimed at quelling the effects of al-Shabab in the strategic Horn of Africa.

Editor's Note

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In its heyday, this Islamic militia held sway in the early 2000s in Somalia, but was driven from the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2006 following an intervention by Ethiopian troops into Somali territory on behalf of the weak transitional government of Somalia. Since that time, resurgent al-Shabab Islamists have been launching a violent insurgency. A ceasefire pact between the Somali government and al-Shabab in 2008 had little positive effect since some factions did not sign onto the deal.

In 2010, al-Shabab -- which was at that point allied with the notorious terror enclave al-Qaida -- was carrying out a violent offensive aimed at overthrowing the government, and even carrying out terrorist acts outside national borders. Indeed, al-Shabab was responsible for two deadly bombings in Uganda in July 2010, thus indicating an increasingly jihadist orientation, in which attacks do not stop at the national borders. Further, al-Shabab was suspected of being behind a number of violent attacks, killings, and kidnappings in Kenya around the same period in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia.

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been in need of humanitarian aid since the second half of 2008. In more recent years, the situation can be characterized as both a political and human crisis, manifested most expressly by a crippling famine and drought crisis.

It should be noted that amidst this state of insecurity, Somalia has advanced a political transition plan.

It should also be noted that, as chaos reigns supreme in the heartland of Somalia, there are also two "republics" in the north. The former British colony of Somaliland---consisting of five districts in the northwest---declared independence in 1991, and the northeastern region---known as Puntland---declared autonomy in 1998. Neither is recognized as a sovereign independent state.

Defense Forces

Military Data

Military Branches:

National Security Force (NSF): Somali Army

Eligible age to enter service:

18 is the legal age for compulsory and voluntary military service

Mandatory Service Terms:

N/A

Manpower in general population-fit for military service:

N/A

Manpower reaching eligible age annually:

N/A

Military Expenditures-Percent of GDP:

N/A

Appendix: Somaliland

People

The population of Somaliland is estimated at around 3.5 million with an average population growth rate of 3.1 percent. Population density is estimated at approximately 25 persons per sq. kilometer.

Fifty-five percent of the population is either nomadic or semi-nomadic, while 45 percent live in urban centers or rural towns. As of 2002, the average life expectancy for the male was 50 years old and 55 years old for females.

Somali is the official language. Arabic and English are the other official languages. The official religion is Sunni Islam.

There are 163 primary schools with a total student population of 33,000. The number of teachers in primary education in the same educational year (1996/97) was 954. Several private schools catered to primary, secondary and vocational trainings exist. At least two universities have been opened in Somaliland during the last few years.

History

Political Background:

The Republic of Somaliland was known as the Somaliland Protectorate under the British rule from 1884 until June 26, 1960, when Somaliland got its independence from Britain. On July 1, 1960, it joined the former Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic. The union did not work according to the aspirations of the people, and the strain led to a civil war from 1980s onwards and

eventually to the collapse of the Somali Republic. After the collapse of the Somali Republic, the people of Somaliland held a congress in which it was decided to withdraw from the Union with Somalia and to reinstate Somaliland's sovereignty.

Somaliland's Parallel History:

The Somali people have inhabited the region of Eastern Africa, better known as the Horn of Africa for close to 3,000 years. They have been basically nomads with no central authority until colonialism took a foothold. In 1840 the British annexed Aden, across the Red Sea in present-day Yemen and began to trade with Somalis in the present-day Somaliland, mostly in order to import meat for their sailors. This trade contact initiated the first interactions between the people of Somaliland and the Europeans.

In 1870, threatened by Europeans presence in the region, Egypt laid claim to Somaliland's coastal areas. In 1877 Egypt and Britain signed a treaty over the occupation of Somaliland with Britain recognizing the Egyptian presence in Somaliland coastal towns, thus establishing relationship with the Egyptians and hence co-existing with each other on both sides of the Gulf of Aden that divides Somaliland and Yemen. In 1884 Britain occupied the former Egyptian Somaliland forcing Egypt to withdraw from Somaliland partly because of the military threats from other neighbors, notably France operating from the French Somaliland (now Djibouti). In 1887, the British Somaliland Protectorate was established with Major A. Hunt of Great of Britain, representing his government drawing up protection treaties with several Somaliland clans guaranteeing them military support. As a result of these treaties, Great Britain extended its rule over the coastal towns by having a presence of vice-consuls in such places as Berbera and Seyla. The colonial state of Somaliland was thus born.

In the early 1950s the people of Somaliland began to demand their independence. In 1957 the governor appointed the first legislative council consisting six Somalis and eight British. In 1959 the council was increased to 33 elected members and three official members. In April 1960, the British colonial government agreed to Somaliland's independence. To facilitate the independence timetable, the British colonial office convened a constitutional conference in London in May 1960. In the aftermath of this conference, the colonial government abrogated 80-year-old treaties that had been entered with various clans. On June 26, 1960, Somaliland became an independent state with its own constitution and government headed by a prime minister, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, the current elected president of the Somaliland Republic. On July 1, 1960, it joined the former Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic.

It is important to emphasize that two territories had different historical milieu although the idea of "greater Somalia" was always an aspiration. However, all was not well. The post-independence period continued to experience clan loyalties, split between regional interest of the north and south

coupled with ambitions for unification with Somali-inhabited territories in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

In 1969, a military coup overthrew the civilian government after the assassination of President Sharmarke. The coup leader, Gen. Siad Barre seized power and assumed the leadership of the country. He declared the country socialist and renamed it the Somali Democratic Republic. Unlike the previous government, Barre's administration was a tightly controlled dictatorship and a Revolutionary Council mainly composed of military and police.

Barre's dictatorial rule was to be the nucleus of opposition in Somali politics. SNM was launched in 1981 and was founded out of disillusionment and demoralization felt in Somalia due to Barre's autocratic rule and Somalis defeat in the 1977-78 Ogaden War against Ethiopia. In the formative years it drew financial and logistical support from Ethiopia. However, in May 1988 Barre and Mengistu signed a peace agreement under which both countries resolved to drop support for rebel movements that they hosted in their own countries. This agreement led to denial of financial and logistical support. In the end, SNM launched an all out offensive against the Barre regime. In retaliation, the Siad Barre regime redoubled its campaign of brutal repression and unleashed aerial bombardment of northern Somalia and 80 percent of the buildings of Hargeisa were destroyed. This campaign of terror extended to the rural areas where livestock were either confiscated or killed and thus destroying people's livelihood.

In 1991, the SNM achieved victory with Siad Barre rolling back his army to the South where the United Somali Congress, or USC, was also challenging his rule. His forces fled Mogadishu and eventually he fled to Nigeria where he died in exile. In the aftermath of this, the SNM leadership and other clan leaders held a congress in Burao to support the idea of reverting to the June 26, 1960, sovereignty of the Republic of Somaliland. The National Charter adopted in Burao later accepted in subsequent peoples conference held in Borama and Hargeisa endorsed the idea.

Perhaps, the whole history of Somali is yet to be written. Yet Somalia has changed in many ways. The difficult in overcoming the past, dealing with new challenges and establishing new state and society relations are likely to be challenges for the leadership. Additionally, the struggle for international recognition has to be met.

Government Structure

The country has a republican form of government. The legislative assembly is composed of two chambers - an elected elder's chamber, and a house of representatives. An elected President and an elected Vice-president head the government. The President nominates the cabinet which is approved by the legislature.

Political Conditions

President Mohammed Ibrahim Egal died in a South African military hospital on May 3, 2002, from complications after surgery. The vice president of this self-declared republic, Dahir Riyale Kahin, was appointed as the successor to the presidency on that same day.

On April 19, 2003, the presidential election for the Republic of Somaliland peacefully concluded. According to the Electoral Commission the UDUB party of the present government won by 80 votes from the nearest rival, the KULMIYE party. On May 16, 2003, the first elected president and vice president of the Republic of Somaliland were sworn in Hargiesha. The president H.E. Dahir Riyale Kahin and the vice president H.E. Ahmed Yusuf Yasin will hold their respective posts for five years.

Local district elections were held in December 2002. Throughout the six regions of Somaliland, people cast their votes at 800 polling stations. Six political parties participated in the elections: ASAD, HORMOOD, KULMIYE, SAHAN, UCID and UDIB.

According to a July 2003 International Crisis Group report on the region, "some semblance of constitutional order and administrative structure is in place."

Supplementary Sources: Government of Somaliland and International Crisis Group

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

War-weary and fragmented Somalia is one of the world's poorest and least developed countries. Years of civil conflict -- the aftermath of which continues to foster insecurity in many parts of the country -- and poor access to services and infrastructure have only worsened conditions. Famine is a constant threat to the population, half of whom live in extreme poverty.

Somalia has had no effective government since 1991 when President Siad Barre was overthrown by opposing clans who failed to agree on a replacement and plunged the country into lawlessness and clan warfare. In recent years, the country has been controlled by various political and regional factions, as well as local warlords. In 2004, after protracted talks in Kenya, the country's main warlords and politicians signed a declaration on a framework for a five-year transition period. A transitional parliament was inaugurated in August 2004 that later elected Abdulahi Yusuf as President of the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG). But its authority was challenged in 2006 by the rise of Islamists who gained control of much of the south, including the capital. With the backing of Ethiopian troops, the TFG had control of Mogadishu at the end of 2006. However, a surge in violence ensued owing to the public resentment of the continued presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia. A national reconciliation process led by the United Nations resulted in the signing of an agreement between the TFG and opposition groups in Djibouti in June 2008. Islamist insurgents fought back against the government and Ethiopian forces, regaining control of most of southern Somalia by late 2008. Ethiopia pulled its troops out in January 2009. Somalia's parliament met in neighboring Djibouti in late January and swore in 149 new members from the main opposition movement, the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia. The parliament also extended the mandate of the transitional federal government for another two years, and installed Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as the new president. Since then, however, there have been no signs of peace and stability, and the government remains fragile with frequent attacks from radical military groups.

Due to armed attacks on and threats to humanitarian aid workers, the World Food Programme partially suspended its operations in southern Somalia in early January 2010 pending improvement in the security situation. Somalia's arrears to the IMF have continued to grow. In late 2011, Somalia appealed against a decision by a U.S. bank to shut down its money transfer service that serves as a "lifeline" for tens of thousands of Somalis who depend on remittances. Somali officials estimate that \$2 billion – one-third of the country's GDP is channeled to Somalia through small

money transfer businesses. Such a closure could lead to the collapse of the economy, they claimed.

In September 2012, Somali lawmakers elected political newcomer Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president in the most inclusive election in the country in years. The move angered Islamist rebels, who called the new leader a traitor while vowing to continue their war to make Somalia a strict Islamic state. With ongoing lawlessness and insecurity, Somalia remains in a situation of crisis and half of the population is in need of humanitarian aid. On the positive side, by September 2012, Somali pirate activity was expected to stay low despite the end of the monsoon season, as aggressive navy action, private armed security teams and defensive measures by ships was keeping pirates away. In 2011, Somali piracy netted \$160 million, and cost the world economy some \$7 billion, according to the American One Earth Future foundation. But in the first half of 2012 there were just 69 incidents involving Somali pirates, compared with 163 in the same period last year, International Maritime Bureau data cited by Reuters showed.

In June 2013, the IMF met with Somali authorities and issued a statement noting that it was exploring ways in which it could provide policy advice and technical assistance to the country for the first time in two decades. The IMF noted: “As it (Somalia) gradually emerges from a prolonged period of internal strife, few economic activities have survived, and much is needed to place it on the path to recovery... This first fact-finding mission found an active resurgence of the private sector in the services industry, namely in the communications, construction, and money transfer sectors.” Then, in early November 2013, Somalia's central bank governor resigned less than two months after taking the position. Yussur Abrar was the first woman to occupy the post. She said she was quitting because of pressure to authorize improper deals. Her stepping down was considered to be a blow to foreign donors providing millions of dollars in aid to the country, which was dealing with an Islamist insurgency.

In early October 2014, Al Jazeera reported that Mogadishu's once bustling central business district was experiencing a construction boom. The economic revival was attracting Somali professionals who had returned from living abroad. By late October 2014, the World Bank said it was re-engaged in Somalia for the first time in 23 years. The World Bank was again providing public financial management, capacity building and budget support to the country. This was partly because Somalia had ended a long period of transitional government and had a new constitution, federal institutions, parliament, president and cabinet.

In October 2015, flash floods in Somalia destroyed thousands of makeshift homes, as well as latrines and shallow wells, according to the United Nations. Sadly, the floods - which made roads impassable and cut thousands off from aid - had the potential to reverse many of the humanitarian gains made in southern Somalia since 2011. Some 3.2 million Somalis -- one-third of the population -- already needed life-saving aid and over one million were internally displaced before the rains began on Oct. 7.

"The El Niño conditions come amid an already fragile humanitarian situation," the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement, as cited by Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Economic Performance

Since 1991, Somalia has been without an effective central government or any governmental institutions administrating the country's affairs. Therefore, economic data such as GDP growth rate, inflation, and the current account balance is not readily available. Years of civil conflicts as well as anarchy have significantly damaged the country's economy. Because of the lack of effective national government, however, Somalia has maintained an informal economy largely based on livestock, money transfer companies, and telecommunications. The private sector has flourished as the country has focused on trading with neighboring and Asian countries, processing agricultural products, and manufacturing on a small scale. Livestock, hides, fish, and bananas are Somalia's major exports. Without a formal banking sector, remittance/money transfer services have been developed throughout the country, handling up to about US\$1.5 billion in remittances a year. Hotels also continue to operate, supported by private-security militias.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: -1.5 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: 0.0 percent

Inflation was measured at: 8.4 percent

Updated in 2015

**Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.*

Supplementary Sources: International Monetary Fund, Al Jazeera, World Bank, Thomson Reuters Foundation and Reuters

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	9,673.13	9,918.74	10,170.59	10,428.84	33,078.33
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	2.539	2.539	2.539	2.539	220.385
Consumption (LCU billions)	5,416.95	5,554.50	5,695.53	5,840.15	19,006.70
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	2,031.36	2,082.94	2,135.82	2,190.06	7,127.51
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	1,837.89	1,884.56	1,932.41	1,981.48	6,608.64
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	4,062.72	4,165.87	4,271.65	4,380.11	4,378.47
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	3,772.52	3,868.31	3,966.53	4,067.25	4,042.99

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	9.926	10.086	10.252	10.428	10.616
Population growth (%)	1.615	1.612	1.645	1.721	1.806
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	974,559.97	983,452.39	992,101.37	1,000,076.37	3,115,782.81

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	11,681.11	12,229.18	12,950.35	13,863.84	45,560.18
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	5.588	4.692	5.897	7.054	228.626
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	82.810	81.107	78.535	75.223	72.604
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	-2.8878	-2.0563	-3.1710	-4.2172	-3.4826

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	2,969.00	2,985.05	2,966.27	2,914.09	2,882.91
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	-0.5360	0.5405	-0.6289	-1.7594	-1.0700
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	29.989	29.405	28.497	27.302	8.515
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	2,900.91	2,916.62	2,898.29	2,847.28	2,816.75
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	-68.0940	-68.4278	-67.9807	-66.8068	-66.1567
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	-0.7039	-0.6899	-0.6684	-0.6406	-0.2000

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	6,081.35	6,275.23	6,615.49	7,019.12	22,263.34
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	1.827	3.188	5.422	6.101	217.181
Lending Interest Rate (%)	15.125	16.919	13.226	13.806	19.024
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.799	9.425	9.392	9.343	8.528

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	9,063.14	7,595.48	7,271.05	7,586.68	23,215.40
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	0.0320	0.0392	0.0420	0.0412	0.0144
Trade Balance % of GDP	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	1.014
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	0.9770	1.002	1.027	1.053	0.2924

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	1.067	1.306	1.399	1.375	1.425
Exports (\$US billions)	0.4483	0.5485	0.5875	0.5773	0.1886
Imports (\$US billions)	0.4162	0.5093	0.5455	0.5361	0.1742

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	5.556	5.556	5.600	5.762	5.987
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	-5.5564	-5.5564	-5.6000	-5.7617	-5.9870
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.0119	0.0119	0.0120	0.0123	0.0128
Petroleum Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0119	-0.0119	-0.0120	-0.0123	-0.0128
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum-WTI (\$/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian (\$/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	0.2651	0.2651	0.2671	0.2749	0.2856
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Based (mm mt C)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	0.2651	0.2651	0.2671	0.2749	0.2856

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	110.630	295.862	152.513	96.019	94.646
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	65.005	144.687	148.888	96.453	89.895
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-45.6247	-151.1754	-3.6251	0.4341	-4.7504
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	4.270	5.356	1.970	2.000	1.922
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	4.273	5.356	1.969	1.999	1.867
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.0029	-0.0001	-0.0009	-0.0008	-0.0549
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	3.000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	-3.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	10.253	1.150	1.150	1.079	0.9704
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	1.044	1.005	0.9984	1.063	0.9146
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-9.2093	-0.1447	-0.1516	-0.0156	-0.0558

World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Consumption (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Production (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gold Exports (kg)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Consumption (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Production (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Exports (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

World Metals Pricing Summary

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper (\$/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc (\$/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin (\$/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead (\$/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel (\$/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold (\$/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver (\$/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

Economic Performance Index

Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
North Americas					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
Western Europe					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
Central and Eastern Europe					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
South and Central America					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
Caribbean					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
Middle East					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
Asia					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
Pacific					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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Chapter 4

Investment Overview

Foreign Investment Climate

Background

Somalia's economic fortunes are being driven by its deep political divisions. The northern area has declared its independence as "Somaliland"; the central area, Puntland, is a self-declared autonomous state; and the remaining southern portion is riddled with the struggles of rival factions. Economic life continues, in part because much activity is local and relatively easily protected. Agriculture is the most important sector, with livestock normally accounting for about 40 percent of GDP and about 65 percent of export earnings, but Saudi Arabia's ban on Somali livestock, because of Rift Valley Fever concerns, severely hampered the sector. Nomads and semi-nomads, who are dependent upon livestock for their livelihood, make up a large portion of the population. Livestock, hides, fish, charcoal, and bananas are Somalia's principal exports, while sugar, sorghum, corn, qat, and machined goods are the principal imports. Somalia's small industrial sector, based on the processing of agricultural products, has largely been looted and sold as scrap metal. Despite the seeming anarchy, Somalia's service sector has managed to survive and grow. Telecommunication firms provide wireless services in most major cities and offer the lowest international call rates on the continent. In the absence of a formal banking sector, money exchange services have sprouted throughout the country. Mogadishu's main market offers a variety of goods from food to the newest electronic gadgets. Political and civil chaos, however, have interfered with any broad-based economic development and international aid arrangements. Due to armed attacks on and threats to humanitarian aid workers, the World Food Programme partially suspended its operations in southern Somalia in early January 2010 pending improvement in the security situation.

Foreign Investment Assessment

The current political situation in Somalia is not conducive to foreign investment at any level. Because of the civil war, many major industries have languished and the infrastructure has been completely devastated. Notable exceptions have been in the areas of hotel services, telecommunications and money exchange. As there is no real central government, no investment policy, no taxation regime, and no government body geared toward the promotion of investment. As well, the regulatory system is basically non-existent.

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture - products: cattle, sheep, goats; bananas, sorghum, corn, coconuts, rice, sugarcane, mangoes, sesame seeds, beans; fish

Industries: a few light industries, including sugar refining, textiles, petroleum refining (mostly shut down), wireless communication

Import Commodities and Import Partners

Imports - commodities: manufactures, petroleum products, foodstuffs, construction materials, qat

Imports - partners: Djibouti 33.9%, Kenya 15.5%, Brazil 6.6%, UAE 5.1%, Thailand 4.2%

Export Commodities and Export Partners

Exports - commodities: livestock, bananas, hides, fish, charcoal, scrap metal

Exports - partners: UAE 37.2%, Yemen 22.3%, Oman 10.1%, China 6%, Kuwait 4.4%, Nigeria 4%

Roads, Airports, Ports and Harbors

Highways: total: 22,100 km

Ports and harbors: Boosaaso, Berbera, Chisimayu (Kismaayo), Merca, Mogadishu

Airports 60; with paved runways, 6

Telephone System

Telephones - main lines in use: 100,000 (estimate)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 35,000

general assessment: the public telecommunications system was almost completely destroyed or dismantled by the civil war factions; private wireless companies offer service in most major cities and charge the lowest international rates on the continent

domestic: local cellular telephone systems have been established in Mogadishu and in several other population centers

international: country code - 252

note - international connections are available from Mogadishu by satellite

Internet Users

approximately 90,000

Labor Force

Labor force: 3.7 million (very few are skilled laborers)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture (mostly pastoral nomadism) 71%, industry and services 29%

Legal System and Considerations

Although Islamic laws (Shariah) dictate many of the legal parameters of life; there is no national judicial system. As well, there is no means for arbitrary intervention in dispute settlements.

Corruption Perception Ranking

N/A; see Corruption Perception index reported by Transparency International elsewhere in this report, from least to most corrupt countries.

Cultural Considerations

As the official religion is Islam, visitors to Somalia should respect the Muslim codes of behavior and dress.

Country Website

N/A

Foreign Investment Index

Foreign Investment Index

The Foreign Investment Index is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5
Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5

Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4

Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5
Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5

Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5
East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9

Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5
Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5
Ghana	5.5
Greece	5
Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a
Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8

Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8
Israel	8.5
Italy	8
Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5

Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5
Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5
Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5

Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5
Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5
Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5

Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5
Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6
Peru	6
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5
Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7

San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7
Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5
Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5
Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5

Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5
Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5
Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5
Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7
Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5
Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9

United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5
Zimbabwe	3.5

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the [United Kingdom](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Austria](#). However, in all these cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased. Other top tier countries, such as [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#), suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case. Slovenia and [Latvia](#) have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern [Ukraine](#) fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring [Russia](#).

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to

be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) versus the [Central African Republic](#), [Burkina Faso](#), and [Burundi](#). [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a new government in [Nigeria](#) generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of [Burundi](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eyebrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in [Libya](#) and [Algeria](#) have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these countries as well. [Syria](#) incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. [Iraq](#) saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. [Yemen](#), likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#) saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like [Pakistan](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) maintaining their low ratings.

The [United States](#) continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of [Mexico](#), there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In [Argentina](#), a default to bond holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International: [Corruption Perceptions Index](#)

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3
5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0
8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0

8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5
12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4
16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0
17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1
22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9
25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1

27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5
31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6
34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2
35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4
39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9
43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2

46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7
49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5
52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4
54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1
56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9
61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9

63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5
66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6
69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5
71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3
75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7

79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8
84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7
84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8
89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9
89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7
97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4

99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4
106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1
111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2
111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3

111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8
120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3
120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1
126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9
130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8

130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8
139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7
139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6
143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5
146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4
146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8

154	Côte d'Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2
158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5
162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0
162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0
168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3

168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8
175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7
178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5
180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4

Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

According to Transparency International, the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of [Serbia](#), is not listed above. No calculation is available for [Kosovo](#) at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, [China](#) claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a [United States](#) domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: <http://www.transparency.org>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Competitiveness Ranking

Competitiveness Ranking

Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

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Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2
Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2
Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1
Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0
United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0
France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5

Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1
Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3
Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2
Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4
Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8
Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4

Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2
Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1
Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1
Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6
Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2
India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6

South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1
Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16
Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0
Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15
Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1
Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5

Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0
Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5
Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5
Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12
Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3
Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7

Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a
Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4
Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3
Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12
Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1

Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6
Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13
Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3
Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1
Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9
Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6

Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21
Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2
Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7
Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4
Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The [United States](#) falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by [Sweden](#) and [Singapore](#) in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of [China](#) continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries
- [Germany](#) moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- [Switzerland](#) tops the rankings

Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: <http://www.weforum.org>

Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Taxation

There is currently no information on taxation in Somalia available.

Stock Market

There is no stock market in Somalia.

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Demography

Somalis have a remarkably homogeneous culture and identity. As early as the 7th century C.E., indigenous Cushitic peoples began to mingle with Arab and Persian traders who had settled along the coast. Interaction over the centuries led to the emergence of a Somali culture bound by common traditions, a single language and the Islamic faith.

Today, about 60 percent of all Somalis are nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists who raise cattle, camels, sheep and goats. About 25 percent of the population are settled farmers who live mainly in the fertile agricultural zone between the Juba and Shebelle Rivers in southern Somalia.

There are a number of smaller ethnic groups of Bantu origin and a modest Arab population. Nearly all inhabitants speak the Somali language, which remained unwritten until October 1973, when the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) proclaimed it the nation's official language and decreed an orthography using Latin letters. Somali is the language of instruction in all schools. Maay is spoken by approximately 11 percent of the population. English is spoken by the well educated in the south and Italian is spoken by the well educated in the north. Arabic is spoken by few people but used widely in prayer.

Cultural Legacy

A paucity of written historical evidence forces the study of early Somalia to depend on the findings of archaeology, anthropology, historical linguistics and related disciplines. Such evidence has provided insights that in some cases have refuted conventional explanations of the origins and evolution of the Somali people. For example, historians once believed that the Somalis originated on the Red Sea's western coast, or perhaps in southern Arabia, but it now seems clear that the ancestral homeland of the Somalis, together with affiliated Cushite peoples, was in the highlands of southern Ethiopia, specifically in the lake regions. Similarly, the once-common notion that migration and settlement by early Muslims, followers of the Prophet Muhammad, along the Somali coast in the early centuries of Islam had a significant impact on the Somalis no longer enjoys much academic support. Scholars now recognize that the Arab factor—except for the Somalis' conversion to Islam—is marginal to understanding the Somali past. Furthermore, conventional wisdom once

held that Somali migrations followed a north-to-south route; the reverse of this now appears to be nearer the truth.

Increasingly, evidence places the Somalis within a wide family of peoples called Eastern Cushites by modern linguists and described earlier in some instances as Hamites. From a broader cultural-linguistic perspective, the Cushite family belongs to a vast stock of languages and peoples considered Afro-Asiatic. Afro-Asiatic languages include Cushitic (principally Somali, Oromo and Afar), the Hausa language of Nigeria, and the Semitic languages of Arabic, Hebrew and Amharic. Medieval Arabs referred to the Eastern Cushites as the Berberi.

In addition to the Somalis, the Cushites include the largely nomadic Afar (Danakil), who straddle the Great Rift Valley between Ethiopia and Djibouti; the Oromo, who have played a large role in Ethiopian history (in the 1990s constituting about half of the Ethiopian population) and were also numerous in northern Kenya; the Reendille (Rendilli) of Kenya; and the Aweera (Boni) along the Lamu coast in Kenya. The Somalis belong to a sub-branch of the Cushites, the Omo-Tana group, whose languages are almost mutually intelligible. The original home of the Omo-Tana group appears to have been on the Omo and Tana rivers, in an area extending from Lake Turkana in present-day northern Kenya to the Indian Ocean coast.

The Somalis form a subgroup of the Omo-Tana called Sam. Having split from the main stream of Cushite peoples about the first half of the first millennium B.C.E., the proto-Sam appear to have spread to the grazing plains of northern Kenya. Establishment of proto-Sam communities seems to have followed the Tana River, and reached the Indian Ocean coast well before the first century C.E. On the coast, the proto-Sam splintered further; one group (the Boni) remained on the Lamu Archipelago, and the other moved northward to populate southern Somalia. There the group's members eventually developed a mixed economy based on farming and animal husbandry, a mode of life still common in southern Somalia. Members of the proto-Sam who came to occupy the Somali Peninsula were called Samaale, or Somaal, a clear reference to the mythical father figure of the main Somali clan-families. This name gave rise to the term 'somali.'

Health and Welfare

In terms of health and welfare, of the 12 million people in Somalia, life expectancy is 49 years of age. The infant mortality rate is 110.97 deaths per 1000 live births. The average literacy rate for the total population is 37.8 percent but belies the disparity across genders. For males, literacy is almost 50 percent; among females, it is just over 25 percent.

The degree of risk of infectious diseases in this country is high. Food or waterborne diseases include bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, and typhoid fever; vectorborne diseases include dengue fever, malaria, and Rift Valley fever; water contact diseases include schistosomiasis; animal contact diseases include rabies.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief at CountryWatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Human Development Index

Human Development Index

Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh
3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon
5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)

6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Suriname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo
13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros
14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti
19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania
22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire

23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea
30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali
34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad
37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau

38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

Source:

United Nations Development Programme's [Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/) available at URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	273.4
2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67
7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33
10	Canada	253.33

11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67
19	Norway	246.67
20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67
25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33
28	Belgium	243.33

29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240
37	Honduras	240
38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33
43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33
46	Spain	233.33

47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230
55	Trinidad and Tobago	230
56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33
61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220
64	Indonesia	220

65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67
73	Mauritius	216.67
74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33
79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210
82	China	210

83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67
91	Yemen	206.67
92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200
97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67
100	Cape Verde	193.33

101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190
109	South Africa	190
110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67
115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33
118	Haiti	183.33

119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180
127	Mozambique	180
128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67
133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33
136	Romania	173.33

137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33
145	Central African Republic	163.33
146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160
151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67
154	Latvia	156.67

155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67
163	Rwanda	146.67
164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140
169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33
172	Armenia	123.33

173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Austria](#) resided at the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index. African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bag with Saudi Arabians reporting healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? *Psychiatry* 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

Happy Planet Index

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the [United States](#) will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1
2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1

4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5
12	Egypt	60.3
13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9
17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3
20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8

22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3
30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2
31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5
35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9
38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2

40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3
48	Armenia	48.3
49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1
53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8
56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7

58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0
66	Slovenia	44.5
67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9
71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5
74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3

76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7
84	Hong Kong	41.6
85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4
89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5
92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2

94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7
102	Australia	36.6
103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0
107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3
110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7

112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0
121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1
125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2
128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9

130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9
138	Burkina Faso	22.4
139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8
143	Zimbabwe	16.6

Source: This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).

Methodology: The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>

Status of Women

Overview

Civil war and the lack of a central government have negatively impacted all of Somalia's citizens, however, women are most acutely affected. Indeed, women are frequent targets of war-related violence, including kidnappings, sexual assault and rape. Domestic violence, hunger, rampant poverty and increasing levels of disease are also issues that women must contend with on a daily basis.

Males continually denigrate women at home and in the work place. While women currently comprise over 40 percent of the workforce, financial compensation is often not enough to sustain one person, let alone a family. Many women turn to prostitution in order to survive financially.

Women are not equal to men in the eyes of the law and, therefore, they suffer societal consequences. Although laws prohibiting rape exist, they are not enforced. Rape and gang rapes occur most often against women in refugee camps. Police, militia, and youth gangs are known offenders of such crimes. Acts of sexual violence continue to contribute to the increasing spread of HIV/AIDS in the region.

Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank:

Not Ranked

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:

Not Ranked

Female Population:

5.4 million

Female Life Expectancy at birth:

50 years

Total Fertility Rate:

7.1

Maternal Mortality Ratio:

1,100

Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:

11,000-45,000

Ever Married Women, Ages 15-19 (%):

N/A

Mean Age at Time of Marriage:

N/A

Contraceptive Use Among Married Women, Any Method (%):

8%

Female Adult Literacy Rate:

25%

Combined Female Gross enrollment ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools:

N/A

Female-Headed Households (%):

N/A

Economically Active Females (%):

N/A

Female Contributing Family Workers (%):

N/A

Female Estimated Earned Income:

N/A

Seats in Parliament held by women (%):

Lower or Single House: N/A

Upper House or Senate: N/A

Year Women Received the Right to Vote:

1956

Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:

N/A

*The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index which measures the average achievement in a country. While very similar to the Human Development Index in its use of the same variables, the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in terms of life expectancy, enrollment in schools, income, and literacy in accordance to the disparities between males and females.

*The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite index measuring gender inequality in three of the basic dimensions of empowerment; economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources.

*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of babies born to women during their reproductive years. A TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement rate; once a TFR of a population reaches 2.1 the population will remain stable assuming no immigration or emigration takes place. When the TFR is greater than 2.1 a population will increase and when it is less than 2.1 a population will eventually decrease, although due to the age structure of a population it will take years before a low TFR is translated into lower population.

*Maternal Mortality Rate is the number of deaths to women per 100,000 live births that resulted from conditions related to pregnancy and or delivery related complications.

*Economically Active Females are the share of the female population, ages 15 and above, whom supply, or are able to supply, labor for the production of goods and services.

*Female Contributing Family Workers are those females who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.

*Estimated Earned Income is measured according to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US dollars.

Global Gender Gap Index

Global Gender Gap Index

Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Country								
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3

Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1
New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5
Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9
Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8
Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40
Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18

Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46
Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43
Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17
Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22
Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62
Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27

Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38
Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44
Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32
Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49
Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39
Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68

Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77
Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52
Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72
Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78
Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73
Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54

Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65
Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84
Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95
Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80
Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a
Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67

Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48
Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93
Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88
Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94
Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85
Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101

Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106
Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115
Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114
Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	0.5960	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103

Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121
Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122
Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123
Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

*new country 2010

Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, [France](#) has

seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the [United States](#) has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. [Canada](#) has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americans in the realm of gender equality. [Lesotho](#) and South African ranked highly in the index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite [Lesotho](#) still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The [Philippines](#) and [Sri Lanka](#) were the top ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context. The [Philippines](#) has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the [United Arab Emirates](#) held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende>

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

Culture and Arts

Content coming soon.

Etiquette

Cultural Dos and Taboos

1. As the official religion is Islam, visitors to Somalia should respect the Muslim codes of behavior and dress.
2. Women and men should dress modestly.
3. No flirting and displays of affection are allowed in public.
4. Always remove shoes before entering a house or Mosque.
5. Never expose the heel of the foot to a Muslim.
6. It is best to avoid discussion of sex, politics, and religion.
7. The left hand is taboo. Never give anything, take anything, drink or eat anything with the left hand.
8. Men and women may be separated during meals and other social activities.
9. Traditional dinners will serve food from a common bowl, possible without eating utensils. When eating from a common bowl, avoid letting your fingers touch your mouth.

Travel Information

Please Note:

This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.

For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

Please Note:

The U.S. Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to Somalia.

There is at this time no U.S. Embassy or other formal U.S. diplomatic presence in Somalia. Consequently, the U.S. government is not in a position to assist or effectively provide services to U.S. citizens in Somalia. In light of this and continuous security threats, the U.S. government recommends that U.S. citizens avoid all travel to Somalia.

The security situation inside Somalia remains unstable and dangerous. Terrorist operatives and armed groups in Somalia have demonstrated their intent to attack Somali authorities, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and other non-military targets. Kidnapping, bombings, murder, illegal roadblocks, banditry, and other violent incidents and threats to U.S. citizens and other foreign nationals can occur in any region of Somalia. In addition, there is a particular threat to foreigners in places where large crowds gather and westerners frequent, including airports, government buildings, and shopping areas. Inter-clan and inter-factional fighting can flare up with little or no warning. This type of violence

has resulted in the deaths of Somali nationals and the displacement of more than one million people.

While some parts of south/central Somalia are now under Somali government control with the military support of African Union forces, al-Shabaab (aligned with al-Qaida) has demonstrated the capability to carry out attacks in government-controlled territory with particular emphasis on targeting government facilities, foreign delegations' facilities and movements, and commercial establishments frequented by government officials, foreign nationals, and the Somali diaspora.

Al-Shabaab-planned assassinations, suicide bombings, and indiscriminate armed attacks in civilian populated areas are frequent in Somalia.

International Travel Guide

Checklist for Travelers

- 1. Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evacuation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.**
- 2. Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.**
- 3. Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.**
- 4. Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.**
- 5. Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure to leave a travel itinerary.**
- 6. Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.**

7. Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.
8. Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.
9. Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.
10. For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of citizenship.
11. Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.
12. If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or toddlers. Note also that whether one is male or female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.
13. Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.
14. Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.
15. Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is suggested.

Note for Travelers

Somalia is a small, developing country in the Horn of Africa. It has had no government since the onset of civil war in 1991. That year, the northwest part of the country proclaimed itself the Republic of Somaliland, and it now has its own governing authority although its economy is linked with the rest of the country. The northeastern section of Somalia, which is semi-autonomous, is known as Puntland. Somalia's economy was seriously damaged by the civil war and its aftermath, but the private sector is trying to reemerge. Tourism facilities are non-existent. The principal city of Somalia is Mogadishu. The principal city of Somaliland is Hargeisa. Other cities and towns of importance include the port of Bosasso in the northeast, the port of Kismayu in the South, Baidoa, and Garowe.

Tips for Travelers

A passport and visa are required in Somaliland and Puntland. Visas can be obtained at the ports of entry. No visas are required for travel to other parts of Somalia, including Mogadishu.

Interclan and interfactional fighting can flare up with little warning, and kidnapping, murder, and other threats to U.S. citizens and other foreigners can occur unpredictably in many regions. While parts of the north have been relatively peaceful, including much of the self-declared "Republic of Somaliland," there have been several recent attacks on Westerners and others in Somaliland. U.S. Government visitors to that region are temporarily restricted from traveling outside the town of Hargeisa.

Somaliland has experienced a level of stability that has not been present in other parts of Somalia. However, travelers should always check current conditions in Somaliland before traveling. Persons traveling to or through this area should be aware that incidents such as armed banditry and road assaults may occur. In addition, there have been reports of general crime and rock-throwing against aid workers outside of Hargeisa. Civil unrest persists in the rest of the country. U.S. citizens should not travel to areas other than Somaliland.

Travelers are urged to use caution when sailing near the coast of Somalia. Merchant vessels, fishing boats and pleasure craft alike risk seizure and their crew being held for ransom, especially in the waters near the Horn of Africa and near the Kenyan border.

There is no U.S. Embassy or other diplomatic presence in Somalia to provide up-to-date security assessments or consular assistance to U.S. citizens.

With the exception of Somaliland, crime is an extension of the general state of insecurity. Serious and violent crimes are very common. Kidnapping and robbery are a particular problem in Mogadishu and other areas in the south.

If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, to contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

Medical facilities in Somalia are extremely limited. Travelers should carry personal supplies of medicines and medications with them. Travelers should also consult with their medical insurance

company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. When making a decision regarding health insurance, travelers should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or if you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

Malaria is endemic in many areas. There were recent outbreaks of cholera in Mogadishu, Kismayo in the south, and the Puntland in the northeast during the past several months.

While in a foreign country, travelers may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States and Western Europe. The information below concerning Somalia is provided for general reference only, and it may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: Poor

Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor

Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor

Availability of Roadside Assistance: None

There are no traffic lights in the country except in Hargeisa in Somaliland. The poor condition of most roads makes driving difficult. Night driving can be dangerous due to the absence of lighting.

Water and electricity systems are poor. An effective telecommunications system exists in major towns in Somalia.

There is no organized system of criminal justice in Somalia nor uniform application of due process. Enforcement of criminal laws is haphazard.

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet.

Sources: *United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet*

Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers

For general information on etiquette in Somalia see our Cultural Etiquette page.

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html - new

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Visa Information from the Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html>

Passport Information from the Government of Australia

<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx>

Passport Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/passport_passeport-eng.asp

Visa Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/visas-eng.asp

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro

<http://www.visapro.com>

Sources: United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Country-Specific Travel Information from United States

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Advice by Country from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

General Travel Advice from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/General>

Travel Bulletins from the Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/>

Travel Tips from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/index.html>

Travel Checklist by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/checklist_sommaire-eng.asp

Travel Checklist from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/checklist>

Your trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

A safe trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Tips for expatriates abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html

Tips for students from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html <http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/broc>

Medical information for travelers from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

US Customs Travel information

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

Sources: United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia; Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>
<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/index.htm>

World Weather Forecasts
<http://www.intellicast.com/>
<http://www.wunderground.com/>
<http://www.worldweather.org/>

Worldwide Time Zones, Map, World Clock
<http://www.timeanddate.com/>
<http://www.worldtimezone.com/>

International Airport Codes
<http://www.world-airport-codes.com/>

International Dialing Codes
<http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm>
<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/>

International Phone Guide
<http://www.kropla.com/phones.htm>

International Mobile Phone Guide
<http://www.kropla.com/mobilephones.htm>

International Internet Café Search Engine
<http://cybercaptive.com/>

Global Internet Roaming
<http://www.kropla.com/roaming.htm>

World Electric Power Guide
<http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm>
<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

World Television Standards and Codes
<http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm>

International Currency Exchange Rates
<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World

<http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html>

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

International Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html>

World Tourism Websites

<http://123world.com/tourism/>

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.usembassy.gov/>

United Kingdom Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/find-an-embassy-overseas/>

Australia's Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/>

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html>

Canada's Embassies and High Commissions

<http://www.international.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/embassies-ambassades.aspx>

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World

<http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm>

Safety and Security

Travel Warnings by Country from Government of Australia

<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/>

Travel Warnings and Alerts from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

Travel Reports and Warnings by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp

Travel Warnings from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll>

Sources: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

United States Department of State Information on Terrorism

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?>

[pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926](http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926)

Government of Canada Terrorism Guide

<http://www.international.gc.ca/crime/terrorism-terrorisme.aspx?lang=eng>

Information on Terrorism by Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/index.html>

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety

<http://www.faasafety.gov/>

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)

<http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html>

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information

<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

Information on Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

Sources: The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the

Government of Canada, the Government of United Kingdom, the Government of Australia, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk Information

Diseases/Health Data

Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.

As a supplement, however, the reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --

Guinea - Ebola

Liberia - Ebola

Nepal - Earthquake zone

Sierra Leone - Ebola

Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --

Cameroon - Polio

Somalia - Polio

Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone

Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -

Australia - Ross River disease
Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles
Brazil - Dengue Fever
Brazil - Malaria
Brazil - Zika
China - H7N9 Avian flu
Cuba - Cholera
Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu
Ethiopia - Measles
Germany - Measles
Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
Kyrgyzstan - Measles
Malaysia -Dengue Fever
Mexico - Chikungunya
Mexico - Hepatitis A
Nigeria - Meningitis
Philippines - Measles
Scotland - Mumps
Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)
Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya
Throughout Central America - Chikungunya
Throughout South America - Chikungunya
Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya

For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Health Information for Travelers to Somalia

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout the region and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Most travelers to malaria risk areas in this region should take mefloquine to prevent malaria. You can be infected with malaria in all areas of this region except the cities of Addis Ababa, Ismara, and Nairobi, the islands of Reunion and Seychelles, and in highland areas above 2,500 meters. For more detailed information about the risk in specific locations, see Malaria in East Africa (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/eafrica.htm>).

A certificate of yellow fever vaccine may be required for entry into certain of these countries. For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm>).

Dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), and Rift Valley fever are diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region. Protecting yourself against insect bites will help to prevent these diseases.

Schistosomiasis, a parasitic infection, is found in fresh water in the region, including Lake Malawi. Do not swim in fresh water (except in well-chlorinated swimming pools) in these countries. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page at URL <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/safety.htm>.)

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine, if you plan to visit the western half of Ethiopia (see meningitis map at URL <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/meninmap.htm>) from December through June.
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- Yellow fever, if you travel anywhere outside urban areas.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11-12 years who did not receive the series as infants.

To Stay Healthy, Do:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filter" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you travel to an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals) and permethrin-impregnated mosquito nets, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague). (For more information, please see the Animal-Associated Hazards on the Making Travel Safe page.)
- Don't swim in fresh water, including Lake Malawi. Salt water is usually safer. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page.)

What You Need To Bring with You:

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects (e.g., malaria, dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, and onchocerciasis).
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. Unless you are staying in air-conditioned or well-screened housing, purchase a bed net impregnated with the insecticide permethrin. (Bed nets can be purchased in camping or military supply stores.)
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See Do's above for more detailed information about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home:

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.

If you become ill after your trip-even as long as a year after you return-tell your doctor where you have traveled.

For More Information:

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in East Africa, such as:

For information about diseases-

Carried by Insects

Dengue, Malaria, Yellow Fever

Carried in Food or Water

Cholera, *Escherichia coli*, diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Schistosomiasis, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact

Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, please check the Diseases (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm>) section and the Health Topics A-Z (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>).

Several cases of African trypanosomiasis (African sleeping sickness) have been reported from this region in recent years, including cases among tourists visiting game parks. For more information and recommendations on trypanosomiasis, see Travelers' Health Information on African Trypanosomiasis (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/aftrypano.htm>).

Also, please check the Outbreaks section for important updates on this region, including information on the Epidemic of Meningococcal Disease in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/outbreaks.htm>).

Note:

Somalia is located in the East Africa health region.

Sources:

The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>

Chapter 6

Environmental Overview

Environmental Issues

General Overview:

Somalia possesses a predominantly semi-arid to arid landscape, and most of the population is engaged in some form of pastoral (agricultural) practices. Yet precisely because of this fact, Somalia's environment remained relatively sound since this form of land use is particularly conducive to land preservation and vegetation maintenance.

The civil war in 1991, however, ushered in a time of environmental stress because any institutional management of the country's ecosystems and biodiversity effectively ceased to exist.

In more recent years, there has been some increase in the population density. Population pressures have contributed to some destructive practices such as overgrazing of livestock, the indiscriminate clearing of woodlands, and other unsustainable activities, to the point at which water resources are threatened, and soil erosion as well as desertification has become a reality.

Current Issues:

- threats to water supplies
- overgrazing
- deforestation
- desertification
- soil erosion
- use of contaminated water and related threats to human health

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):

N/A

Country Rank (GHG output):

N/A

Natural Hazards:

- recurring droughts
- frequent dust storms over eastern plains in summer
- floods during rainy season
- famine

Environmental Policy

Regulation and Jurisdiction:

The regulation and protection of the environment in Somalia is under the jurisdiction of the following:

- National Environmental Co-ordination Committee
- Ministry of National Planning

Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

N/A

International Environmental Accords:

Party to:

- Endangered Species
- Law of the Sea
- Ozone Layer Protection

Signed but not ratified:

- Marine Dumping
- Nuclear Test Ban

Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):

Somalia is not a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

GHG Emissions Rankings

Country Rank	Country
1	United States
2	China
4	Russia

5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom
9	Canada
10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico
13	France
14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia
21	Ukraine
22	Poland

23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands
27	Kazakhstan
28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela
31	Argentina
32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates
39	Algeria
40	Nigeria

41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines
45	Vietnam
46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal
49	Colombia
50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden
57	Syria
58	Libya

59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland
63	Turkmenistan
64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco
67	New Zealand
68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador
75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia

77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia
81	Yemen
82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain
85	Angola
86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala
93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar

95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia
99	Ghana
100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia
103	El Salvador
104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan
111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia

113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania
117	Nicaragua
118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania
121	Georgia
122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania
129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea

131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo
135	Benin
136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti
139	Congo, DRC
140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger
147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso

149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan
153	Sierra Leone
154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali
157	Seychelles
158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia
165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau

167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada
171	Lesotho
172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa
175	Cape Verde
176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros
183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati

Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong
Not Ranked	Liechtenstein
Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco
Not Ranked	San Marino
Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

* European Union is ranked 3rd
Cook Islands are ranked 184th
Niue is ranked 186th

Global Environmental Snapshot

Introduction

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20th century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments, environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential-for instance, public health and education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage-for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining-can seem justified insofar as such activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

Regional Synopsis: Africa

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further

compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

Key Points:

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a

marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

Regional Synopsis: Central Asia

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental

problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

Key Points:

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

Regional Synopsis: Europe

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests. Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20th century was a century fixated on oil, the 21st century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

Key Points:

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a

prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70 percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

Key Points:

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks,

contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

Regional Synopsis: North America

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies—a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use

of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20th century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are

California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

Polar Regions

Key Points:

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

Global Environmental Concepts

1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases

The Greenhouse Effect:

In the early 19th century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19th century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil

fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20th century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the [United States](#), the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will

likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

*** See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. ***

2. Air Pollution

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the [United States](#). It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater

insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

3. Ozone Depletion

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (OPS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

4. Land Degradation

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

Desertification and Devegetation:

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation." As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies, are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

Deforestation:

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for

proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

5. Water Resources

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and

moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

Freshwater:

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western [United States](#), current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.
- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.

- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionuclides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

Marine Resources:

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

6. Environmental Toxins

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionuclides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remediative approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment. Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded

and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the [United States](#), how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in [China](#), elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

More About Biodiversity Issues:

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "[Biodiversity Assessment](#)"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity. The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The [United Kingdom](#) identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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Uitto, Juha I., and Akiko Ono (eds). 1996. Population, Land Management and Environmental Change. The United Nations University, Tokyo.

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Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

United Nations Environmental Program. URL: http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

[<http://www.unep.net/>](http://www.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

[<http://climatechange.unep.net/>](http://climatechange.unep.net/)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

[<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>](http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

[<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm)

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

[<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>](http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm)

World Resources Institute.

[<http://www.wri.org/>](http://www.wri.org/)

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

[<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>](http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html)

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

<http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/>

International Environmental Agreements and Associations

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Introduction

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discussions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing

emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, [Japan](#) in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990 levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the [United States](#) (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and [Japan](#), are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries - - with the obvious exceptions of [India](#) and [China](#) -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries. Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and [Japan](#), are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, [Germany](#), in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCCC's 7th Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a

political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as [Russia](#), [Japan](#) and [Canada](#) agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome

burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto, Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.

Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and [United States](#) President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in [Mexico](#) City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as [South Africa](#), had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. [Bangladesh](#) identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012,

would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But [Australia](#) went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as [China](#) and [India](#). Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like [China](#) and [India](#), with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, [China](#) -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, [China](#) had announced it would reduce the intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, [China](#) was now accusing the [United States](#) and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the [United States](#) -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with [Japan](#) for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, [China](#) demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on [India](#) -- another major player in the developing world and a country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in

[India](#), who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in [India](#) was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and [India](#) were joined by [Brazil](#) and [South Africa](#) in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in [Denmark](#) would be classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, [Tuvalu](#) demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their citizens. [Tuvalu](#) also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from [Kiribati](#) joined the call by drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of [Kiribati](#) could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Kiribati](#) in the Pacific, and the [Maldives](#) in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant [Saudi Arabia](#) was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the [United States](#) demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. [United States](#) President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the [United States](#) Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the [United States](#)

Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, [United States](#) Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the [United States](#) was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17 percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US\$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of [Sweden](#) -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by [China](#) and [India](#), appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the

boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to shore up support for a new climate change, [United States](#) President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the [United States](#) and [China](#). At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The [United States](#) argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in [Qatar](#) extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of [Nauru](#), a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: "We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us."

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with [United States](#) President Barack Obama's request for \$60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the [United States](#) and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around \$10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance (for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#), are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in [Qatar](#) (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: <http://aosis.org/>

Special Report

COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP)

in Paris, [France](#), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States](#) leader acknowledged that the accord was not "perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have. "

Former [United States](#) Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental

advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accomplishments enshrined in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- \$100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, [Denmark](#), in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as [China](#) and [India](#), objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the \$100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around \$44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the \$100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the [United States](#), which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, [China](#) and [India](#) were not held to the same standards as the [United States](#) and European countries. In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in sea level. Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of [Tuvalu](#) issued this dismal reminder: "Tuvalu's future ... is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of [Tuvalu](#). No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?" It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find consensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its

responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the [United States](#) and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as [Russia](#), [China](#) and [India](#), there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Fiji](#), and the [Marshall Islands](#), called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of [Kiribati](#), "Imagine living in a place where you know it's going to go away someday, but you don't know what day that wave's going to come over and wash your home away." He added, "It's a disaster we know is going to happen." Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as [Kiribati](#). Stone explained, "For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion," Stone explained. "So it's not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it's also about the day that there's just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island." Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, "If you look ahead 50 years, a country like [Kiribati](#) could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere."

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the [United States](#). He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk. In a formal statement, Debrum declared: "We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to

survival.” Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, “Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era.”

Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, “Climate change won’t stop overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer.”

Editor's Entry on [Environmental Policy](#):

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Fiji](#), among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and climate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being uninhabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in [France](#), with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human

beings across the world.

1. Major International Environmental Accords:

General Environmental Concerns

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Accords Regarding Atmosphere

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985 including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Depleted the Ozone Layer, Montreal, 1987

Accords Regarding Hazardous Substances

Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, Bamako, 1991

Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), Basel, 1989

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992

Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention), Waigani, 1995

European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva 1957

FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985

2. Major International Marine Accords:

Global Conventions

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention 1972), London, 1972

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by Protocol of 1978 relation thereto (MARPOL 73/78), London, 1973 and 1978

International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1969 (1969 CLC), Brussels, 1969, 1976, and 1984

International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1971 (1971 Fund Convention), Brussels, 1971

Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Co-operation (OPRC), London, 1990

International Convention Relation to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties (Intervention Convention), Brussels, 1969

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 1982

Regional Conventions

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Oslo Convention), Oslo, 1972

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources (Paris Convention), Paris, 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), Paris, 1992

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1974 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1992 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1992

Conventions within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Bucharest, 1992

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Cartagena de Indias, 1983

Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, Nairobi, 1985

Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution, [Kuwait](#), 1978

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Sea (Barcelona Convention), Barcelona, 1976

Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, Jeddah, 1982

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, Noumea, 1986

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific, Lima, 1981

Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, Abidjan, 1981

3. Major Conventions Regarding Living Resources:

Marine Living Resources

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Canberra, 1980

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Rio de Janeiro, 1966

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), Washington, 1946

Nature Conservation and Terrestrial Living Resources

Antarctic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 1959

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), Paris, 1972

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Nairobi, 1992

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Bonn, 1979

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Washington, D.C., 1973

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Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Paris 1994

FAO International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, Rome, 1983

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Freshwater Resources

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, Helsinki, 1992

4. Major Conventions Regarding Nuclear Safety:

Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Assistance Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Notification Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

7. Other Networking Instruments

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

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Methodology Note for Demographic Data:

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The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

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-- See also list of News Wires services below, which are also used for research purposes. --

Note on Edition Dates:

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nauru
- Cuba
- Palau
- Holy See
- San Marino
- Korea, North
- [Serbia](#) & Montenegro
- Liberia
- Somalia
- Liechtenstein
- Tonga
- Monaco
- Tuvalu

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Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US\$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: <http://www.undp.org>

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Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

USING COUNTRYWATCH.COM AS AN ELECTRONIC SOURCE:

MLA STYLE OF CITATION

Commentary

For items in a "Works Cited" list, CountryWatch.com suggests that users follow recommended patterns for indentation given in the *MLA Handbook*, 4th edition.

Individual Works

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Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61 October, 12, 2003.

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Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. "People." *CountryWatch.com: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *CountryWatch.com: France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_topic.asp?vCOUNTRY=61&SECTION=SOCIAL&TOPIC=CLPEO&TYPE=TEXT. October 12, 2003.

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