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18 December 2012 – 1 January 2013



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1. Al-Shabab & internal violence

Foreign media

UN News Service, dated 18 December 2012

“UN experts on use of mercenaries urge greater oversight for private security contractors”

- Somalia and Puntland were reminded to be cautious in their use and integration of mercenaries and militias into their armed forces
- Mercenary armies are regularly created to augment the national security forces, but are less frequently disbanded, leading to the continued existence of militias
- A lack of transparency and accountability in the organization of militias can deteriorate the maintenance of human rights values, for which the UN is concerned

The Independent (Kampala), dated 27 December 2012

“AU Forces kill more Al Shabab, seize weapons”

- AMISOM forces have moved forward against Al Shabab, defeating a group of insurgents and capturing more weapons

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 20 December 2012

“Six dead in Kismayo over illegal roadblock”

- Members of Ras Kamboni militia in Kismayo, who are allied with government forces, clashed with rogue soldiers at an illegal roadblock
- This is the latest incident in rebel forces attempting to disrupt the security of the city, and not the first time members of the Ras Kamboni militia have been implicated in violent conflict

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 21 December 2012

“Eight killed in a fight in Kismayo”

- In an alternate report regarding the skirmish at a roadblock in Kismayo, different sources allege members of Ras Kamboni militia attacked Somali government forces who were guarding a legitimate roadblock checkpoint
- Eight people were killed, including an unspecified number of civilians

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 December 2012

“Unknown gunmen attack Somali/Kenyan forces”

- An unidentified group of gunmen attacked a convoy of Somali and Kenyan forces outside Dhobley town, killing four
- Dhobley was recently captured by the allied forces from Al Shabab

Shabelle Media Network, dated 25 December 2012

“Al Shabab fighters surrender to Govt” by Maalik Eng

- A number of young Al Shabab militants deserted, surrendering to government forces in the Bay region
- These are the latest to defect in the region, where unspecified numbers of Al Shabab members have been surrendering recently

Shabelle Media Network, dated 26 December 2012

“100-day ultimatum for Al Shabab to surrender”

- The Minister of Interior and Security called upon Al Shabab youth to surrender to the government and work to rebuild the country
- Despite the title of this article, there is no reference to the minister making a 100-day ultimatum, however the minister did state that surrendering Al Shabab youth would be offered amnesty by the government

2. Semi-autonomous regions

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 18 December, 2012

“Puntland security forces hold event in Bossaso”

- The Puntland administration held an event honouring the armed forces and security forces of Puntland for their defense of Puntland
- Attacks from Al Shabab have become more frequent in the region in recent months

Garowe Online, dated 21 December 2012

“Two new Puntland political associations declared in Garowe”

- Two new political associations were formed in Puntland this week, bringing the total of official associations to seven
- The associations are being formed in advance of elections taking place later this year

Garowe online, dated 26 December 2012

“Former governor says Puntland opposition figures have ‘personal ambitions’”

- The political situation in Puntland becomes more complicated as political associations that are legally forming are being accused of having clan foundations (this is, in fact, likely) and the leaders of having personal power ambitions
- There is ongoing tension between those who support a democratic, multiparty system, and those who have clan-based political inclinations

Garowe Online, dated 26 December 2012

“Somaliland announces three official political parties”

- Somaliland approved three official political parties that will be legally recognized for the next ten years
- Four others seeking recognition were denied
- Political associations were allowed to form following local elections that took place in November
- It is unclear exactly how this will effect upcoming elections, but the article notes that it was done in an effort to avoid electoral fraud in the future

Garowe Online, dated 31 December 2012

“8th and 9th Puntland political associations declared in Garowe”

- Two more official political associations were formed in Puntland ahead of elections, bringing the final number of official parties to 9

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 December 2012

“Skirmish between Somaliland and Khatumo State”

- Tensions between Somaliland and Khatumo state, a semi-autonomous region in the north, broke into violent conflict after Khatumo forces attacked Somaliland forces in the Sool region
- The question of which region has administration over Sool has recently increased tensions between the two areas

Foreign media

The Star (Nairobi), dated 28 December 2012

“The last stand of Somalia’s jihad” by James Verini

-This is an excellent analysis of Kenya’s involvement in the situation in Kismayo and southern Somalia

-It asserts that it is in Kenya’s best interest to stabilize the region, so that it can begin the official return of the half-million Somalis living in Kenyan refugee camps in the country’s northern border region

-The siege of Kismayo, as the biggest stronghold of Al Shabab, had to be taken in order to create some semblance of a legitimate authority in the region

-The author also takes an objective view on the discussion regarding Jubaland, which Kenya would use as a sort of buffer protectorate to make space between a region it would have control over, and the political and military upheaval in the rest of Somalia

-The difficulty here is that this unilateral move is unsupported by the West and potentially illegal under international law, as it could be seen as simply an annexation of parts of Somalia

3. Humanitarian concerns

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 20 December 2012

“IDPs in Mogadishu face medical and life hardships”

-Thousands of internally displaced persons in Mogadishu are living in poor conditions that have resulted in malnutrition and outbreaks of diarrhea

-Neither the government nor the international community has provided enough humanitarian assistance since these IDPs fled their homes after drought in south Somalia last year

Foreign media

International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House (Toronto), dated 19 December 2012

“Editor arrested over human rights reporting in Somaliland”

-The editor-in-chief of Waaheen newspaper in Hargeisa, Mohamud Abdi Jama (also know as Huuto), was arrested after answering a court summons regarding comments he made about human rights violations in Somaliland and presidential fiscal corruption

-The National Union of Somali Journalists is calling for his immediate release but the government has yet to release a statement on his condition

UN News Services, dated 21 December 2012

“Plight of Somali boat people must stop, UN expert says after latest Gulf of Aden tragedy”

- Due to continued issues of insecurities, Somalis attempting to flee Somalia often undertake a dangerous journey by small boat across the Gulf of Aden
- 55 of these people died after the boat they were in – which was overcapacity – capsized after leaving the port of Bosasso
- People will continue to endanger their lives as they flee the country unless the security situation can be mediated

The Star (Kenya), dated 22 December 2012**“Fury over order for all refugees to go to Daadab” by Kibiwott Koross**

- Amnesty International condemned the Kenyan government for forcing all refugees and asylum seekers into refugee camps away from urban centres, saying it is discriminatory and unlawful restriction on freedom of movement
- Hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of whom are Somali, live in the Dadaab and Kakuma camps

4. International relations

Foreign media

Pambazuka News, dated 20 December 2012**“Ethiopia and Kenya have taken over Somalia” by Mohamud M Uluso**

- This article asserts that, with little knowledge or consent from the Somali federal government, Ethiopia and Kenya under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development intend to ‘takeover’ and ‘perhaps later annex’ Somalia in an agreement, that on the surface, appears only to ensure the stabilization of central and south Somalia
- What is suspect about the agreement is that it appears it is made separate from the current, internationally agreed transitional plans for Somalia by the UN and the AU
- Further, the author is concerned because only Kenya and Ethiopia are included in the Memorandum of Understanding, and not other neighbouring countries with a vested and AU-associated interest in Somalia (for example, Djibouti, Uganda)
- **Note from monitor: this article, while conspiratorial, continues to highlight the tensions between Kenya and Somalia, that remain a problem in their relationship*

Capital FM (Nairobi), dated 21 December 2012**“Kenya, Somalia to revive cooperation pact”**

- The presidents of Kenya and Somalia met to discuss the Joint Commission for Co-operation originally agreed upon in 2005
- The need for greater cooperation to promote bilateral relations between the two countries is a priority
- The report is vague on the actual issues deemed important, however the situation in Dadaab refugee camp was a major concern, and discussions of rights of return were initiated

The Star (Nairobi), dated 28 December 2012

“IGAD’s shocking memorandum of understanding” by Abdi Dirshe

-A second, and clearer article on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia, which allows greater unilateral and legal use of force and security by Kenyan and Ethiopian military and political interests in Somalia

-This article also asserts the document undermines the legal authority of the Somalia government, and specifically the president

-Further, it also describes Jubaland as a sort of protectorate state governed by AMISOM forces – far from the semi-autonomous region that Garowe Online has repeatedly described

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 23 December 2012

“Federal minister blasts international aid to Somalia, demands change”

-The Somali minister of social affairs asserted the international community has not done enough to cooperate with the federal government to coordinate aid according to the country’s needs

-He demanded that all international aid agencies “present their plans and consult with the Somali Federal Government prior to aid operations in the country”

***The danger of limiting aid to areas that the government deems ‘appropriate’ could have major ramifications for people in need throughout Somalia*

5. Governance

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 December 2012

“Afgoye district commissioner talks about the return of a checkpoint in his district”

-A new roadblock was erected in Afgoye region, which the district administrator defended as a checkpoint to collect taxes that will assist in rebuilding the infrastructure of the area

-The roadblock is contested after President Hassan announced a moratorium on all roadblocks, as they are illegal

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 December 2012

“Brawl mars Parliament Session”

-The first day of the new parliament was interrupted when a brawl broke out between politicians, whose discussions for the day included the national budget, the status of foreign offices, and military salaries

-Parliament was adjourned to reconvene the following day

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 26 December 2012

“Federal parliament rejects 2013 proposed budget”

- Following the first session of parliament, which resulted in a brawl on the floor, the elected representatives voted to reject the government’s proposed budget
- The government must present an alternate budget within 30 days

Garowe Online, dated 27 December 2012

“Kismayo leader welcomes federal ministers from Mogadishu”

- A delegation from the central Mogadishu government was welcomed in Kismayo to examine the security situation
- The delegation stated it was not there to oversee the management of the new administration which will be formed in accordance with the new Jubaland region/state

Garowe Online, dated 29 December 2012

“Remaining cabinet approved as former PM Gaas resigns from parliament”

- Former prime minister of the transitional government, Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, resigned his seat as MP for unspecified reasons
- He is expected to return to the United States, where he is an academic

Garowe Online, dated 30 December 2012

“PM Shirdon on 1,000 new troops, Somaliland dialogue and Jubaland process”

- 1000 new government troops were dispatched across Somalia in order to secure parts of the country and ensure that the government decree to remove all illegal roadblocks is followed through
- The diplomatic channels between the central Mogadishu authority and those of Puntland, Somaliland, and now Jubaland, are still fraught with tension, as various political factions in each disagree about levels of autonomy

Garowe Online, dated 30 December 2012

“Federal delegation’s visit to Kismayo stirs renewed controversy”

- Garowe Online continues to see the visits by Mogadishu delegations to Kismayo as the threat of a centralized authority over the fight for autonomy of a region that deserves its independence
- There are disagreements regarding the nature of the slowly-forming Jubaland administration

Foreign media

Government of Ethiopia, dated 31 December 2012

“Somali parliament endorses 2013 budget bill”

- Five days after the parliament rejected the 2013 federal budget, they unanimously voted to approve it following an undisclosed number of amendments