

Somalia Domestic Media Monitoring

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Headlines

- The Changing Tactics of al-Shabaab
- The London Conference
- Allegations of Rape Amid Fighting in Bay Region
- New Media Law in Puntland Proposed
- Illegal Roadblocks Stir Controversy

The Changing Tactics of al-Shabaab

Mogadishu Residents on Alert After String of al Shabaab Attacks

Sabahi Online (Foreign Media), May 7, 2013

http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/05/07/feature-02

- Mogadishu residents are playing an active role in helping to secure the city following the April 14th attack by al-Shabaab on Mogadishu's main court complex and a deadly car bomb in central Mogadishu a month earlier.
- "The opportunity we have with the public today is one we can use to ensure security," Deputy Governor for Security Affairs in Benadir Warsame Mohamed Hassan said. "We are promising the public that individuals who are accused of being part of al-Shabaab will not be released until they go through the appropriate legal procedure because the public is very concerned about that."

- One resident witnessed a car driving in the wrong direction on a busy road and remarked how "fear came over us as soon as we saw the car driving in the wrong direction [...] we felt [the only thing we could do] was to scream to alert others in case the vehicle was carrying explosives".
- "Thank God, the police in the other car went to investigate and found that the driver did not know how to drive," She added

Fighting in Gedo and Lower Juba Region

Shabelle Media Network (Independent Media), May 8, 2013

<http://shabelle.net/fighting-in-gedo-and-lower-juba-region/>

- Heavy engagement between the Raskamboni militia and members of Alshabab occurred at via Afmadow suburbs in Kismayu
- Similar fighting occurred last night at the town of Garbaharey the capital of Gedo region. The fighting between federal government troops and members of al-Shabaab occurred inside the town.
- Members of al-Shabaab militia launch guerilla attack government troops frequently in areas recently liberated from them.

Al-Shabaab Strikes Back

Somaliland Times (Pro-Somaliland Media), May 11, 2013

<http://www.somalilandtimes.net/sl/2013/589/27.shtml>

- Al-Shabaab is now targeting government officials, AMISOM peacekeepers, Turkish and now Qatari nationals in suicide attacks.
- Reports indicate that owing to these grievances al-Shabaab has exploited rising inter-clan rivalries to win support in rural areas, but also to gain access to Somali National Army uniforms and key sites within major cities such as Mogadishu and Kismayo.
- Despite efforts to establish a secured area around the capital's key sites - such Bakara market and federal government buildings - al-Shabaab has demonstrated its capability to infiltrate and stage high casualty attacks in a bid to destabilise President Mohamud's government.
- In Kismayo, Somalia's second largest port, al-Shabaab has already been successful in breaching AMISOM-secured areas to attack high-profile targets.

Monitor's Note: There has been deliberate shift in the strategies of al-Shabaab. No longer are they as concerned about maintaining and gaining back territory from the Federal Government. This is evident in the change of tactics; the increased use of suicide bombings (asymmetric warfare) and the targeting of key government institutions and facilities, particularly the judicial sector are being utilized to achieve two objectives: sow fear within the public and destabilize the government. The intended victims of terrorism are not limited to the direct victims of terrorism's violence. Rather, terrorism's true target is

the general public and violence is a mechanism used to attain a much more potent military goal than mere casualties – the instillation of fear and terror (hence, “terrorism”). Fear creates distrust and discord within society, slowing down progress (as evident in the first article where erratic driving is being conflated with precursors to bombings): businesses become wary of their customers, people do not attend public functions, gather in groups, engage in cultural exchanges (such as attending films, viewing sports games) etc. This distrust permeates not only within society and between private individuals, but is also directed towards the government. This is the second objective of al-Shabaab’s new tactics: to destabilize the Federal Government. The brazen attacks, in broad daylight in the busy streets of Mogadishu, supposedly SFG territory, cause residents to question the government and its ability to provide adequate security. Historically, one of the reasons that al-Shabaab has been preferred by certain regions was, despite their insistence on the imposition of Sharia (Islamic) law, they could provide stability – something the (at that time) Transitional Federal Government and warlords could not. Al-Shabaab knows that if the current SFG is able to prove to its people that it can provide stability for them, this will legitimize SFG rule and relegate al-Shabaab further to a mere fringe, radical militia group. Furthermore, the targeting of judicial institutions is meant to portray the judicial system as vulnerable, non-autonomous, undeserving of trust and thus, illegitimate in eyes of Somalis. These new tactics by al-Shabaab are not active strategies to win back Somalia, rather they are aimed at destabilizing the current regime as an impetus for its collapse, forcing the Somali people to turn to the only other alternative – them.

The London Conference

London Conference Participants Commit Support to Somalia

Sabahi Online, (Foreign Media), May 8, 2013

http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2013/05/08/newsbrief-02

- The conference was hosted by Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and British Prime Minister David Cameron, and attended by 54 leaders of countries and international organisations.
- Participants encouraged regional administrations to work closely with the government in line with the federal constitution, praising talks in April between the Somali federal government and the Somaliland region.
- Participants also expressed support for other recent developments in Somalia, including the partial lifting of a United Nations arms embargo, the extension of the African Union Mission in Somalia's mandate, progress in fighting piracy and the creation of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia.

Second London Conference Opens Amid Protests

Garowe Online (Pro-Puntland Media), May 7, 2013

http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Second_London_Conference_opens_amid_protests_printer.shtml

- Outside the conference, hundreds of protestors with slogans and billboards were accusing President Hassan of not being inclusive and not being sincere about the reconciliation process and federalism in Somalia.
- According to the protestors, President Hassan violated the federal constitution and is suppressing federalism.
- The follow up to last year's conference did not include Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo and Puntland President Abdirahaman Mohamed Farole or representatives from other regions in the country.
- The US Secretary of State John Kerry did not attend the conference following President Obama's renewal of sanctions on the country

Allegations of Rape Amid Fighting in Bay Region

Bay Region Gov't Forces Clash While Being Accused of Rape

Garowe Online (Pro-Puntland Media), May 9, 2013

http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Bay_region_gov_t_forces_clash_while_being_accused_of_rape.shtml

- One civilian and one government troop were killed on Thursday following a battle between government forces stationed in Baidoa capital of Bay region.
- According to government authorities, the troops who had initiated the clashes left the frontline where they were battling Al Shabaab and arrived in Baidoa to complain about not being paid their salaries.
- Authorities in Baidoa, gave an order to troops stationed in the city to remove the unhappy government forces out of town that led to the clashes.
- Authorities also stated that the upset government troops had carried out acts of robbery and rape.
- Bay region Police Chief Mahad Abdirahman stated that at least 6 rape cases have been reported.

Monitor's Note: Post hoc ergo propter hoc is the logical fallacy that attributes the cause of an event to that which preceded it. No other media outlets reported this story and thus there is no corroboration that the alleged gov't rapes were in fact a direct manifestation of their frustration over salaries, rather than two independent incidents.

New Media Law in Puntland Proposed

Civil Society Meeting to Review Draft Media Law in Puntland

Garowe Online (Pro-Puntland Media), May 11, 2013

http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Civil_society_meeting_to_review_draft_Media_Law_in_Puntland.shtml

- In 2012, the draft Media Law stirred controversy among Puntland journalists, who accused Ministry of Information officials of failing to consult journalists and civil society representatives in drafting the state's Media Law. The meeting is the first of its kind since the Media Law was drafted in November 2012.
- Mr. Burhan Ahmed Dahir, the General Secretary of Media Association of Puntland and chairman of the National Association of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), told the gathering that Puntland media "has been awaiting the Media Law and I encourage the journalists, experts and civil society representatives to contribute and analyze them"

Illegal Roadblocks Stir Controversy

Illegal roadblocks Setup by Gov't Forces Make Truck-Drivers Go On Strike

Garowe Online (Pro-Puntland Media), May 11, 2013

http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Illegal_roadblocks_setup_by_gov_t_forces_make_truck-drivers_go_on_strike.shtml

- The drivers' strike comes after they allege that government soldiers set up roadblocks to embezzle cash from drivers who constantly use the busy main highway connecting the Lower Shabelle region – rich in farmland – and Mogadishu the capital of Banadir region
- According to local sources, more than 10 roadblocks have been setup between Bal'ad in the Lower Shabelle region and Mogadishu.
- Somali government forces and AMISOM have forced out Al Shabaab from the major cities in Shabelle region. However government forces in the region have been marred by accusations of civilian robbery and rape.

AMISOM Troops Remove Some Illegal Road Blocks at Shabelle Region

Shabelle (Independent Media), May 12, 2013

<http://shabelle.net/amisom-troops-remove-some-illegal-road-blocks-at-shabelle-region/>

- AMISOM troops have removed some of the illegal road blocks that operated at the lower Shabelle region of Somalia.
- Officials from AMISOM, the administration of the region and federal government troops are currently holding a meeting to discuss the tackling of insecurity in the region. The AMISOM

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troops have secured some of the roads in the region and motorists have welcomed the operation.