

Devin Morrow, MIGS Desk Officer for Somalia
20 November – 3 December 2012



1. Al-Shabab & internal violence
2. Democratization & governance
3. Humanitarian concerns & human rights
4. International relations

1. Al-Shabab & internal violence

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 20 November 2012

“Troops move toward rebel-held town”

- SNA and AMISOM troops continue to take towns on the Mogadishu-Baidoa road without much difficulty
- There is some concern that Al-Shabab is orchestrating a ‘tactical retreat’ and preparing an upcoming onslaught, which government troops are preparing for

Shabelle Media Network, dated 22 November 2012

“Somali gov’t vows further push against Al Shabab”

- Somali government and AMISOM troops continue their attempts to recapture all Al-Shabab strongholds, particularly in the lower Shabelle region. Afgoye and Marko, outside of Mogadishu have both been reclaimed by government troops

Shabelle Media Network, dated 22 November 2012

“Suspected Al Shabab fighters attack home of security official in Kismayo”

- Despite the reclamation of Kismayo by AMISOM and government forces, Al-Shabab agents continue to act within the town limits
- A senior Somali official was attacked at home in Kismayo, but escaped unhurt

-Attacks and explosions are not declining despite the government and military presence

Shabelle Media Network, dated 22 November 2012

“Security forces in Somalia’s capital carry out operations”

- In a large sweep north of Mogadishu, over 20 suspected Al Shabab agents were arrested by Somali security officials
- Armed clashes occurred overnight between Al Shabab and government forces in the area

Shabelle Media Network, dated 23 November 2012

“Govt soldier exchange gunfire, two killed”

- Fighting broke out in Mogadishu between Somali government troops and unidentified combatants, while Somali forces were removing an illegal checkpoint

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 November 2012

“Clashes in Somalia’s port city of Kismayo, charcoal export resumed”

- Violence continues to occur in Kismayo against government and AMISOM troops
- Though charcoal exports are banned by the Security Council, there are reports of ships carrying it out of the town
- The fighting overnight resulted in “unconfirmed human losses”

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 November 2012

“Al Shabab briefly take over border town”

- Fighting between Al-Shabab and government forces in Belad-Hawo briefly resulted in Al-Shabab acquiring the town, but government troops quickly recaptured it
- The town is important strategically, as it is located on the road to Kenya

Shabelle Media Network, dated 25 November 2012

“Heavy blast heard in southern port city of Kismayo”

- More violence in Kismayo, where a large explosion targeting the Ras Kamboni militia went off on the side of the road. Ras Kamboni is allied with government forces in Kismayo
- No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack

Shabelle media network, dated 25 November 2012

“Govt forces, AU forces move close to Jowhar town”

- Residents of Jowhar town are fleeing ahead of what is expected to be a heavy government onslaught against the Al-Shabab-controlled town in coming days
- Jowhar is another town on the Mogadishu-Baidoa road that holds strategic significance

Shabelle Media Network, dated 27 November 2012

“Big blast hits AU soldiers in Marko, South Somalia”

- AMISOM forces were the target of a huge explosion in Marko, south of Mogadishu

-No group has yet claimed responsibility

Shabelle Media Network, dated 29 November 2012

“Gov’t soldiers battle Al Shabaab in Gedo, southwest Somalia”

-Government and AMISOM forces attacked the Al Shabab stronghold of Gedo, with Kenyan support

Shabelle Media Network, dated 2 December 2012

“A fierce tribal fighting kills at least 38 people in central Somalia”

-Clan warfare turned deadly in central Somalia’s Galgadud region, when two clan militias fought over a water-well. 38 people were killed in the battle, which ended when elders intervened to discuss the dispute

Shabelle Media Network, dated 3 December 2012

“Somali minister unscathed in ambush”

-Al-Shabab ambushed Somalia’s interior minister while he was visiting Marko, south of Mogadishu. He escaped unscathed, and continued his trip

Independent media

African Arguments, dated 21 November 2012

“How Al Shabab is losing the battle, but maybe winning the war” by Abdi Aynte

-This analysis suggests that Al Shabab’s sleeper cell activity is actively damaging Kenyan-Somali relations

-After last week’s disaster in Eastleigh in Kenya, Kenyans retaliated against any ethnic Somalis in their state –KDF forces stationed along the border attacked Somali civilians in rage

-The author posits that Kenya is acting predictably as Al-Shabab intends, and only aggravating negative relations between Kenya and Somalia

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 21 November 2012

“Sanaag governor hosts security meeting in Badhan”

-Puntland government officials are discussing security after more Al Shabab agents were recently caught in the mountains. As Puntland prepares for upcoming elections (and political parties or ‘associations’ begin to form), security is a major theme among authorities

Garowe Online, dated 22 November 2012

“Somalia’s security forces apprehend 16 alleged Al Shabaab fighters”

-Almost 20 Al Shabab agents were arrested in Mogadishu after government officials received information on upcoming attacks against government institutions

-The operation included the acquisition of a large cache of weapons as well

Garowe Online, dated 24 November 2012

“Govt forces repel Al Shabab ambush in Gedo region”

- There are mixed reports that Al-Shabab may have captured a city in the Gedo region, which the Somali government denies after heavy fighting in the area
- It is believed that though Al Shabab briefly gained control and pillaged the city, the government eventually won it back
- Government forces did not report their casualties

Foreign media

The New Vision (Uganda), dated 25 November 2012

“Govt forces kill top Al-Shabaab commander” by Henry Mukasa

- An important Al-Shabab commander responsible for Gupta, Sokohola, and Huluwai areas of Somalia, Guludupu, was killed in a raid by SNA forces
- Ugandan AMISOM forces applauded the mission, which also led to the arrest of 16 other Al-Shabab militants and a large cache of weapons and ammunitions

2. Democratization & governance

Independent media

IPS, dated 20 November 2012

“Tough foreign policy challenges for ‘Iron Lady’” by Abdurrahman Warsameh

- The foreign minister Fauzia Yusuf Haji Adan is being referred to as the ‘Iron Lady’ – a credit to her apparent determination and strong-mindedness as the first female foreign minister in Somalia. Her main areas of concern are Somalia’s relationships with Somaliland, and the attempted creation of Jubaland in southern Somalia, which is backed by both Puntland and Kenya

Pambazuka News, dated 22 November 2012

“IGAD strategy for Jubbaland breaks up Somalia” by Mohamud M Uluso

- Article suggests that aside from Al-Shabab terrorism, there are three sources of threat facing Somalia
- The first threat is regional instability: weaker states are in danger when geographically close to stronger states, who actively demerit the authority of the state’s territory and politics by virtue of its weakness
- The second threat is the label of ‘failed state’ which ‘sabotages’ international support of the weak state – international donors will not provide support to a state that has ‘failed’
- The third is the incompatibility of federalism with traditional clan systems
- Until these are addressed, Somali will continue to be unstable

Pambazuka News, dated 22 November 2012

“Somalia comments & analysis” by Abdirahman M. Dirye

-This article argues against the development of a multiparty democratic system in Somaliland, with the fear the extremists will infiltrate parties, so that “multiparty politics [develop] into a destructive force”

-“Unregulated democracy” will allow for ‘jihadists’ and other extremists to legally run for political office

There is no alternative offered in this article, but an overarching fear that multiparty elections are inherently corrupt

Pro-Puntland media

Garowe Online, dated 22 November 2012

“The future of Puntland is in multiparty system”

-Puntland continues to prepare for upcoming elections and this editorial argues towards the merits of a multiparty system

-The current reigning party has identified itself as such, but this author purports that more than one party is required in order to create a legitimate democratic system

-Further, a multiparty system will help to defeat the clan system that has had traditional control over politics throughout the region

-Generally, clan-based systems rely on elders to make decisions, whereas a multiparty system will help Puntland choose leaders based on “merits and competency”

Garowe Online, dated 23 November 2012

“Second Puntland political association announced”

-The upcoming Puntland elections will officially be a multiparty race, as a second political association was announced for the Puntland Democratic Party, led by Prof. Abdirahman Haji Salad

Garowe Online, dated 25 November 2012

“President Hassan gives stern warning to armed forces”

-With recent rising civilian death tolls, both within and outside of battle areas, Somali president Hassan released a statement warning the armed forces to uphold the rule of law in their action. The high numbers of civilian collateral damage is not acceptable

-Further, there are regular reports of civilians coming in to altercations with soldiers and government forces that result in violence, which was also condemned by the president

Garowe Online, dated 26 November 2012

“Somaliland destabilizes regional security, Puntland warns”

-There are tensions rising between the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, after Puntland accused Somaliland of encroaching on their land

-Upcoming elections are adding to the tensions, which, as this article reports, have been strained since 2002

Garowe Online, 27 November 2012

“Mayor attacks Somaliland election commission office in Erigabo”

-There are reports of corruption and conflict ahead of the Somaliland elections, particularly in Sanaag region, where apparently the mayor of a town sent gunmen to an election office. This is the second time there has been a shooting at a polling station in Somaliland, conducted by officials afraid to lose power

Garowe Online, dated 28 November 2012

“Six killed as local militia clash with Somliland over elections”

-Violence broke out in Somaliland between security forces and local militias who disagreed with the elections, which took place today
-Groups throughout the region loyal to current local political leaders have demonstrated against the elections repeatedly in recent days
-Some areas of Sanoog region have cancelled the elections for “security reasons”

Garowe Online, dated 28 November 2012

“Welcoming rallies for Puntland leader in Waiye and Armo districts”

-There were supposedly welcoming demonstrations throughout Puntland as its president toured some of the regions to open new development projects
-The president’s new political association ‘Horseed’ had supporters who wore t-shirts with the party name emblazoned on it, saying “No to Clans”

Garowe Online, dated 30 November 2012

“Five committees to prepare Jubaland convention established”

-The development of Jubaland is underway with the formation of five committees that include delegates from communities throughout the area to ratify the convention that will establish Jubaland
-The regions of Jubaland will include Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, and Gedo
-Currently the frontrunner for possible president of the impending state is the head of the Ras Kamboni militia, Ahmed Mohamed Islam (Ahmen Madoobe)
-Developments to this report are ongoing

Garowe Online, dated 2 December 2012

“A smiling new president for a country in desperation”

-This critique of President Hassan’s vision for Somalia is a pro-Puntland perspective, and questions Hassan’s commitment to federalism, and the influence of his advisors on his decisions
-Further, it highlights the president’s praise for Somaliland’s recent elections, though this author notes that a “military democracy” is inherently problematic
-Lastly it criticizes the president’s lack of vision for Somalia’s long-term needs, specifically the creation of Jubaland

Garowe Online, dated 1 December 2012

“Ahlu Sunnah militia officially joins Somalia’s federal government”

-Ahlu Sunnah militia officially joined Somali government troops after being allied to the government since 2010

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 24 November 2012

“Puntland forces seriously wound two protestors in Qardho”

-Protests turned violent in Qardho, northeast Somalia, when Puntland forces opened fire on a crowd that included women and children

-The president of Puntland was visiting the city for undisclosed reasons, prompting a large demonstration against him

Shabelle Media Network, dated 30 November 2012

“Ras Kamboni militia gun down civilian in Kismayo – witnesses”

-In another instance of civilians being the victims of armed forces violence, Ras Kamboni militia killed a man in Kismayo in an execution-style murder in the middle of the market. There is no further explanation yet

3. Humanitarian concerns

Foreign media

International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House (Toronto), dated 22 November 2012

“Journalists’ union releases report on impunity”

-The National Union of Somali Journalists released a report outlining attacks and threats against journalists in Somalia on 22 November. Eighteen journalists have been killed in 2012

-The report hopes to bring attention to the human rights abuses and assassinations of Somali journalists to prevent future atrocities against freedom of expression

Reporters sans Frontieres (Paris), dated 23 November 2012

‘Impunity – war on Somalia’s journalists’ – a NUSOJ report

-More details on the report put out by the National Union of Somali Journalists that aims to end impunity

-Three suggestions were included in the report: media law reform to protect journalists, murder investigations into all 44 journalist deaths since 2007, and criminal prosecutions against those responsible

International Committee of the Red Cross (Geneva), dated 27 November 2012

“Many still struggle with food insecurity in the South”

- The ICRC worked to deliver food and seed to over 170,000 people in southern Somalia including Lower Juba
- Levels of food insecurity remain high throughout the area, with the combination of conflict and flooding making it impossible for people to grow enough food for themselves
- The ICRC stated that food distribution has made for a better situation this year than last year, and plans to continue the program until January. However the situation is still dire for thousands of people

International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House (Toronto), dated 27 November 2012

“BBC Journalist held without charge in Somalia”

- BBC journalist Ibrahim Mohamed Adan was arrested and detained for a week in Mogadishu for allegedly falsely reporting a military court ruling for a soldier’s execution. No charges or court date have been set yet
- CPJ and IFEX demand his immediate release, as authorities cannot imprison a journalist because they disagree with his story
- Adan has yet to be released

IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, dated 3 December 2012

“Illegal migration on the rise in Somaliland”

- Youth from Somliland are joining the rising numbers of global migrant workers, as they flee their home for Europe, passing through Ethiopia, Libya, and Sudan on the way
- Sources cite high levels of unemployment in Somaliland as the main factor in the proliferation of increasing numbers of illegal migrant workers
- Youth who become illegal migrant workers are at higher risk of being taken advantage of by human traffickers

4. International relations

Privately-owned media

Shabelle Media Network, dated 20 November 2012

“President strongly condemns horrific terrorist grenade attack in Eastleigh”

- The Somali president condemned the terrorist attack that took place in Kenya on 18 Nov that allegedly had Somali connections. The press release comes in response to rising tensions between Somalia and Kenya.

Shabelle Media Network, dated 21 November 2012

“Somali Ambassador – Police stations to open in Eastleigh”

- After the terrorist attack in Nairobi, Kenya on 18 November, clashes continue between Somali and Kenyan factions in the city

-The Somali ambassador to Kenya requested police stations open to maintain the security in areas of the city where fighting is taking place

Foreign media

UN News Service, dated 22 November 2012

“Security council stresses need for comprehensive global response to tackle piracy”

-Security Council says piracy is a result of continued instability in Somalia and throughout the region. The UN also urged Somalia investigate and prosecute pirates in the establishment of ‘anti-piracy courts’

Think Africa Press, dated 28 November 2012

“Understanding Somali piracy on land and sea” by Awet Weldemichael & Abdisalam Hassan

-Analysis of Somali piracy. The root causes have not yet been analyzed. The author says the root causes are fears of illegal fishing and subsequent ownership of fishing areas. This led to organized crime syndicates that moved into ransom piracy, which local fisherman became drawn to due to gang mentalities that developed through the organized crime circles

-Author links this to social and economic problems throughout Somalia, not only in the coastal regions

-These must be addressed before there will be an effective end to piracy