

**SOMALI DOMESTIC BROADCASTING
MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT – MIGS
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CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND:



Somalia, located in the Horn of Africa, is a country that has been plagued with political, economic, developmental and social instability for decades. The country is divided into several self-declared autonomous regions, Somaliland; a self-proclaimed independent state, Puntland and Galmudug, both of which are autonomous states within Somalia. Without the existence of a functioning government, a new transitional parliament was set in place in 2004, known as the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG). However, the TFG's control of Somalia is very limited and holds power only in parts of the capital city, Mogadishu, and some areas in central Somalia. Power is regionally divided in

Somalia between the following recognized groups; the TFG; the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS); the Puntland Administration; the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a Administration and, the Galmudug Administration. Somalia also has a high presence of powerful Islamist anti-government groups, the most infamous being Al-Shabab, which began gaining strength in the region in 2007. Since then, they have affiliated and allied themselves with Al-Quaida, and with the support of warlords in Somalia, have continued to gain strength and entrench their presence in Somalia. The region is also currently devastated by severe drought and famine, leaving many citizens internally displaced and on the brink of starvation. Somalia is currently in the process of establishing a frame-work for development, and hopes to proceed with national elections in the year 2012, as the interim governments mandate reaches an end.

**HUMANITARIAN CRISIS
PRIVATE MEDIA REPORTS:**



(Photo: Internally displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia awaiting the arrival of food and aid)

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 26th Sept 2011)

- As the drought and famine continues in Somalia, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which has been working in the region of Lower Shabelle, southern Somalia, has faced recent challenges that compromise the delivery of aid to the victims in the region.
- According to sources on the ground, Al-Shabab officials have accused the ICRC of corruption and mismanagement of aid, and consequently have suspended their operations in the region, which is currently suffering severe drought.
- There have been contradicting reports that accuses Al-Shabab for continuous harassment of humanitarian aid agencies, and seizing all the aid that is brought regions in their control.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 24th Sept 2011)

- The TFG issued a statement that the aid that has been delivered to Mogadishu has not been sufficient.



(Photo: Al-Shabab Militants)

- People from many different areas around Somalia have migrated to the capital in search for relief from famine.
- Internal displacement is high in Somalia due to this drought, and TFG minister for Internal Affairs and national Security has made it clear that the demand highly exceeds what is being received, and additional aid is necessary from the international community.
- However, the international community might be reluctant on extending assistance and increasing aid in Somalia because TFG officials were recently accused by the United Nations for mismanaging the aid that is being received for drought victims.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 24th Sept 2011)

- Ahmad Diriye Ali, Somali elder and spokesman for the Hawiye Cultural and Unity Council, told Shabelle that there is risk of suspension of humanitarian aid for the growing number of internally displaced peoples in Mogadishu.
- Despite the delivery of humanitarian aid into Somalia, people continue to die of starvation at a startling rate.
- Mr. Ali stated that the TFG has the capabilities and the means to address the food shortage, however reports have uncovered that some of the food meant for the victims of drought and famine was being sold in markets.
- Public outcry persists as the government continues to overlook the corrupt handling of humanitarian aid.

(Source: Radio Garowe, Garowe, Puntland, Somalia, 24th Sept 2011)

- Puntland's Radio Garowe reported a meeting that occurred on Saturday, September 24th that was attended by 315 MP's, chaired by the First Deputy Speaker of TFG Parliament, MP Abdiweli Ibrahim Mudey in Mogadishu.
- This meeting was held mainly in order to address the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to Somali communities.
- The MP's demanded that the government create reports on how food and aid was distributed, and a committee thus appointed with the responsibility of following up on this issue.
- This initiative will hopefully expose corruption, and stop the unfair distribution of humanitarian aid.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 22nd Sept 2011)

- Due to the tension and conflict between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and anti-government Al-Shabaab group, the TGF recently disallowed the delivery of aid into any regions under the control of Al-Shabaab. However, as it became increasingly apparent that the areas worst hit by drought and famine were also those that were under Al-Shabaab control, the government decided to revoke the ban and allow delivery of aid and assistance into those areas.
- The following statement was delivered by the TGF Minister for Information, Posts and Telecommunication. "Civilians in areas under the Al-Shabaab Movement's control have been subjected to many problems and have been barred from accessing the most basic of their needs. Despite this, the delivery of much needed assistance to them is a matter of priority for the government. We are however not in a position where we can fully ensure the security of aid workers that have come to assist Somali civilians if killed or attacked in areas under Al-Shabab's control. We are therefore inviting the aid workers to work with others in formulating safe avenues in the delivery of assistance to civilians without endangering the lives of the aid workers. It is important that we get that balance right."

INTERNAL SECURITY PRIVATE MEDIA REPORTS:

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 25th Sept 2011)



(Photo: President Muhamad Ahmed Alin)

- As a response to the killings and explosions that are occurring in the northern region of Galkayo, the President of Galmudug state in central Somalia agreed to an exclusive interview with Shabelle Media Network on Sunday, September 25th, 2011.
- President Mohamed Ahmed Alin stated that the crimes were being committed by those from Puntland, and stated that Al Shabaab, a group of Islamist militants, were not involved in any of the criminal acts.
- Furthermore, he declared that he was committed to

securing the region, and will remain vigilant of any insecurity related activities.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 24th Sept 2011)

- President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), was unable to pay a scheduled visit to battle zones in Mogadishu, due to the heavy conflict between Somali government forces and Al-Shabaab militia, that was occurring in parts of the city; the districts of Bondhere and Hodan specifically.
- Witness reports claim that bitter gun battles left civilians in the area dead and injured. Local reports have accounted for the deaths of at least 10 civilians, and more than 20 others injured.
- A press conference was held subsequently, and President Ahmed claimed that, "government forces had the upper hand, and made victories over the fighting."

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 24th Sept 2011)

- Although Mogadishu has become a main location in Somalia in which citizens gather in order to escape other regions of Somalia highly affected by drought, they often find themselves in the midst of another threat. Armed conflicts between Somali government groups and Al-Shabaab, along with infighting between different groups within the Somali government itself, have become a common occurrence in the capital city.
- Internally displaced people in Mogadishu regularly complain of the fighting, the dangerous living conditions, and plead with the Transnational Federal Government of Somalia to relocate soldiers further away from areas inhabited by civilians.
- Spokesman for the Internally Displaced People in Mogadishu's Tarabunka grounds expressed his concern for the hundreds of families that are caught in the cross fire on Shabelle Radio, and urged TFG Prime Minister, Abdiweli Muhammad Ali to intervene in the matter.
- A response regarding this issue from the government has yet to occur as fighting continues in the midst of civilian areas.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somali 19th Sept 2011)

- As the presence of Al-Qaidah increases in Somalia, the TFG Governor for Lower Shabelle, Southern Somalia, Dr. Abdikadir Muhammad Nur Sidii, held a press conference in Mogadishu to address his growing concerns.
- Dr. Sidii said that residents of Lower Shabelle have been oppressed and harassed by Al-Quiadah and Al-Shabaab members.
- Following a meeting between the Governor, President of the TFG, Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ambad and sections of the Lower Shabelle population, a plan was discussed and presented. The discussions concluded that the only way to oust Al-Shabab and Al-Quiadah members from the region would be through air strikes to be carried out by NATO and the US. Land masses were identified as targets, for they were supposedly being readied for Al-Qaidahs senior official.

(Source: The Somaliland Times - Issue 503: 17th-23rd Sept 2011, Somaliland, in Somalia)

- On September 14th, 2011, Horriyo Abdulkadir Sheik Ali, a 20-year-old radio journalist was shot by unknown gunmen four times as she left her office at Radio Galkayo, in Galkayo; which is located in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, Somalia.
- Colleagues of Abdulkadir said that she, along with several other local journalists, had received numerous threats from unknown callers due to their coverage of the conflicts between militias and government troops, and their particular focus on the civilians that were victimized by the ongoing conflict.
- In past months, there had been several other incidences and attacks on journalists, including a bombing at a local radio station, Radio Dajir, in Galkayo, and wrongful detainment of journalists such as Abdifata Jama, who was imprisoned for two months for conducting an interview with an rebel leader.
- The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) condemned the shooting and urged the government to take immediate action.
- CPJ East African Consultant, Tom Rhodes, stated, "We are disturbed by the shooting of Horriyo Abdulkadir SHEik Ali and home for her speedy recovery. Puntland authorities must double their efforts to seek the perpetrators of this act and ensure journalists are allowed to report n the current conflict without fear of reprisal"

(Source: Radio Gaalkacyo, Gaalkacyo, in Somalia 1015 GMT 22nd Sept 2011)

- On the 22nd of Sept, 2011, reporter Hasan Muhammad Ali was injured while returning home from work at the local Radio Daljir station, located in Boosaaso port town, in the north-eastern region of Somalia.
- The radio station reported that Mr. Ali was shot by unknown armed militants, and as a result suffered serious injuries and remains in critical condition at local hospital.

INTERNAL GOVERNANCE MATTERS PRIVATE MEDIA REPORTS

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia, 26th Sept 2011)

- In accordance with the first phase of the Somali consultation meetings that were held in the beginning of September, the second phase of the meetings is to be held in October in Garowe, Nugaal Region, Puntland in north eastern Somalia.
- Muhammad Mahmud Hasan is a member of the Federal Somali Parliament, hailing from Puntland, who warned that due to the transfer of insecurity from southern Somalia, "The region (Garowe) could no longer be trusted to guarantee the security of senior Transition Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) officials and representative of the international community."

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia 19th Sept 2011)

- The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) recently made the decision to reform the Federal Somali Parliament. The reforms included a reduction of the number of MP's. Specifically, the number of MP's will be reduced to 300, on which 100 will be appointed from

the TFG parliament, another 100 from the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), 75 from the Puntland Administration, and the remaining 25 to be appointed from both the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a Administration and the Galmudug Administration.

- This decision however has caused unrest and sprouted concern from the Alliance for Peace. They issued a press statement in which they cautioned that this reform would spark controversy and further political deadlock in Somalia.
- The amount by which the MP's are being reduced, and the criteria that is used to form the division of MP's will likely create a difficult political situation that will only halt any chance of progression.
- Citizens have also voiced similar complaints in regards to this reform.

(Source: Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somalia)

- Rival groups in Central Somalia recently agreed to engage in dialogue. The Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a Administration plans to ask the de facto group several questions such as, what the reasons behind forming a new administration were, and whether they had the support of residents in the areas.
- Officials of the newly formed administration in the town of Cabuq Waaq, Central Somalia declared several plans, including intensifying attacks on Al-Shabaab forces, along with improving relations with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, and the International Community as a whole.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRIVATE MEDIA REPORTS



(Photo: Dr. Ali addressing the General Assembly)

(Source: Puntland Post website, Garowe, Puntland, in Somalia 25th Sept 2011)

- On Sunday September 25th, Somalia's Prime Minister, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali addressed the General Assembly in order to discuss the current state of Somalia. During his address, Mr. Ali spoke on the going conflict in the region; the growing concern over the Al-Shabaab Islamist militant groups; the presence of Al-Qaida affiliated groups in Somalia; and the intensifying humanitarian crisis that is occurring due to extreme drought.
- Dr. Ali began his address by warning of the increasing threats posed by Al-Shabaab forces and Al-Qaida groups, stating that although there has been a retreat of forces from Mogadishu, "it may herald a new and more dangerous phase of the conflict as they increasingly turn to asymmetric tactics such as suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices targeting the civilian populace." In addition, he warned of recent threats made by the two groups that declared their intentions of continuing their battle against the government of Somalia, and wanting to target and destroy the United Nations and the United States of America. Furthermore, Dr. Ali informed the General Assembly on the spread of Al-Shabaab to regions outside of Somalia, for it has been made well-known that efforts have been, and are continuously being made in order to radicalize and recruit Somali citizens in regions

such as Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States.

- Turning his focus onto the present large-scale humanitarian crisis in Somalia, Dr. Ali stressed the dire situation of Somali's, and pleaded for increased international action.
- The drought that led to a wide spread famine in many parts of Somalia, particularly the southern and central regions, is devastating, and Dr. Ali placed direct blame on Al-Shabaab for inflaming the already intense effects of the drought through constant disruption of aid and destruction of resources in the country. More specifically through, "their policies of systematically looting grain stores; forcible recruitment of and extortion from farmers and their families; and preventing access to the most affected regions in the south to aid agencies."
- Dr. Ali concluded his address by highlighting the positive efforts that are being made within Somalia that dawn hope for improvement within the region.
- In Early September, a national consultative conference was held in the capital, Mogadishu, in which "a road map for the re-establishment of legitimate and representative government," was produced. Somalia, having been without any form of functioning government for decades, has finally begun to take responsible steps towards the direction of peace and transition.
- In keeping with the process of responsible and productive action for change, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the President of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), met with Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General, in order to further discuss the development of Somalia; the humanitarian crisis, and the issue of piracy, which has plagued the region for years.

(Source: Garoweonline website, Garowe, Puntland, in Somalia 22nd Sept 2011)

- Garoweonline recently published an article by Dr. Michael A. Weinstein, Professor of Political Science at Perdue University in Chicago. The article, titled 'Somalia: A Roadmap to Nowhere,' was a criticism of the three-day "Consultative Meeting on Ending the Transition in Somalia," that took place from September 3rd-September 6th 2011 in Mogadishu, also mentioned above in Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali address to the General Assembly. Although Dr. Ali claimed that the meeting proved successful and was a solid foundation for Somalia's future political, social, and economic development, Dr. Weinstein noted numerous faults and pitfalls within the 'road-map.'
- Dr. Weinstein states that the Roadmap is presently nothing more than, "a series of directives on the instrumentalities for accomplishing the major "transitional tasks:" security, finalizing a constitution, reconciliation of Somali factions, and "good governance."
- Although the tasks are highlighted, a concrete plan to achieve them was not. Furthermore, numerous roadblocks that elevated the goals to an unreachable height were identified. They included insufficiency of resources; political fragmentation and side-conflicts; the competing interests of the many mini-administrations within the region; and the lack of international oversight in Somalia's 'transition' process to a permanent and legitimate government.
- The solution that Dr. Weinstein presents is as follows: "The "donor"-powers/U.N. will have to wade into the swamp of Somalia's political differences – and if they want the "transition" to proceed as they have planned, they will have to get into the thick of high Somali domestic politics and take sides, because the Somali factions will not reach a consensus by themselves."
- He predicts that if such extreme measures are not taken and abided by, Somalia will fall into the same crippling political cycle. This is because as some Somali participants involve

themselves in the process, they will assert their interests as they develop the new government, while those who have been excluded or oppose the process in its entirety will rebel, thus opening the door for more political tension and increased conflict within the region.