Islamist Networks in Somalia

FOI Somalia Papers: Report 2

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Sammanfattning

Den här rapporten undersöker de islamska domstolarnas uppgång och fall, samt andra islamistiska nätverk i Somalia. De nätverk som studien analyserar kan sägas ha växt fram ur den traditionella somaliska administrationen som en direkt följd av den politiska strukturen som dominerats av en nomad- och jordbruks- baserad ekonomi. Försök av inhemska, så väl som internationella, islamister att skapa en islamistisk stat av Somalia har aldrig lyckats. Rapporten menar att huvudanledningen till detta är att den första vågen av internationaliserad islamism i Somalia misslyckades i och med förlusterna man led under inbördes- kriget på 1990-talet. Därmed förlorade också de internationella islamisterna den främsta möjlighet de haft att skapa ett islamistiskt Somalia. Den andra vågen att använda Somalia som bas för att sprida global jihadism inleddes 2000 men kom av sig i och med den etiopiska invasionen 2006. Rapporten diskuterar även fram- tida utmaningar som inbegriper de somaliska islamisterna.

Nyckelord: Somalia, islamism, nätverk

Summary

This report examines the rise and subsequent downfall of the Union of Islamic Courts and other Islamist networks in Somalia. These networks have, as represented in the study, always existed and are derived from a traditional model for administration, adapted to a social and political structure based on a population dominated by nomadic and agricultural economies. Although several attempts have been made by domestic, as well as international, Islamists to make Somalia an Islamist state they have never succeeded. The report argues that the principal reason for this is that the first wave of internationalized Islamism in Somalia failed when the Islamists were defeated on the battleground by their enemies during the civil war. With that, the international Islamists lost their best entrance to Somalia. The second wave of attempts to use Somalia to spread global Jihadism began in 2000 but reached a blind alley at the start of the Ethiopian invasion in December of 2006. The report then discusses possible challenges concerning the Somali Islamists.

Keywords: Keywords: Somalia, Islamism, Networks

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Preface

What is Somalia? A failed state? The sum of an ancient clan-system? A safe haven for militant Islamists? A humanitarian disaster? The bases of operation for notorious pirates? Several states? A consequence of proxy wars? The many faces of Somalia seem to constantly elude the consciousness of the international community. And yet we cannot avoid Somalia, one minute threatening the fabric of world security, the next upsetting global trade.

When the Swedish Defence Research Agency's (FOI) Africa Group in September 2008 decided to address some of the issues associated with Somalia, it soon became apparent that no one model, narrative or description would suffice. The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze once rejected the hierarchical structure in favour of the non-structured organisation, consequently naming the book where he put forth his theory *Milles plateaux (A Thousand Plateaus)*. It is perhaps in the post hoc light of Deleuze that the four papers in FOI's Somali series best are to be understood. Instead of seeking unity in an explanatory model, four thesis-driven perspectives have been chosen: A historical investigation of the state of Somalia, by Peter Haldén, a descriptive report of the Somali Islamist networks, by Magnus Norell, an economic perspective on the Somali piracy, by Karl Sörenson, and a sequential analysis of the Ethiopian and Eritrean involvement in the Somalia conflict, by Mathias Krüger. Hence, instead of attempting to explain Somalia, this report series adds yet another plateau.

The FOI Somali papers were commissioned by the Ministry of Defence.

November 2008   *Karl Sörenson*

Editor of the FOI Somali Papers

Acronyms

AIAI	al-littihaad al-Islamismi
AQ	Al Qaida
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
ARS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organizations
MJY	The Movement of Jihadi Youth
MYM	Mujahediin Youth Movement
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNITAF	United Nation's Unified Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia

Purpose

The purpose of the following report is to present a survey of the most important Islamist networks active in Somalia today, and an outline of the background to the current situation in Somalia. It should be noted that most aspects of Somali society, including humanitarian, political and security, have been in a state of deterioration since 2006. Considering the limitations in time and resources for this study, we have concentrated on the southern and central parts of Somalia only. The nominally independent part of Somalia (i.e. the part of Somalia consisting of the northern areas, formerly British Somalia) will only be dealt with briefly. This region of Somalia has been spared the violence which torments the rest of the country. The issues and our conclusions will be outlined so that if we are given additional resources (both in terms of financial assistance and time) - we can, on short notice, begin follow up studies which will focus on the connections between these networks and the region at large and also the Islamist networks and their connections to Europe.[1]

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[1] Islamist;The term *Islamist* (in Islamist networks) in my study describes a politicized form of Islamic activities which includes the use of violence. In other, mainly religious contexts the term may also describe different activities where there is no violence. The term *Jihadism* in this study refers to the violence prone form of Islamism which above all is driven by the idea of a global war against the "west" and "the enemies of Islam" (who of course can be other Muslims and Muslim states).

1   Introduction

In January of 1994, while on duty in UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia) the writer first saw a report which contained the names of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida (AQ).[2] The report came from the American military intelligence service. It was not primarily about bin Laden or AQ, rather it focused on the then current Islamist networks active in Somalia. These networks were not at that time looked upon as obviously hostile either to the U.S. or the UN. The report was more an attempt to understand the complex situation behind the collapse of the Somali state and the ensuing civil war after the dictator, Siad Barre, was overthrown in the beginning of 1991, a situation which continues today.

These networks functioned as local administrations offering rudimentary services to the population. They had always existed, and even during Barres rule the networks seemed to be a safeguard both against the brutal central government and the tendencies towards disintegration in the country that already existed.[3] The central government has rarely had control of the whole country. These networks are the precursors of the current much talked about Islamist networks. This is of some importance because it has often been described in reports that these networks suddenly appeared on the political scene with ready made connections to AQ and countries on the Arabic peninsula**.**

There is no central government in Somalia today, which has led to a total lack of administrative services in the country.[4] On the local level there have been an assortment of administrations which have given the population rudimentary services, although not of the quality which a central government could provide. The Islamist networks have been important for the creation of these structures. Considering that 60% of the Somali population support themselves through agriculture, the local administrations have quickly taken over certain areas of the police force and security services, tax enforcement, rudimentary health service as well as the administration of justice (the latter, founded on *Sharia* law and a form of traditional Somali clan rule called *xeer*).[5]

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[2] UNOSOM I and II were the UN's attempt to stabilize the situation and build a functioning state on the ruins of the overthrown regime. Everything has failed in spite of persistent and sometimes very costly initiatives, and Somalia today suffers from an even worse situation than previously.

[3] Lewis, I.M., <u>A Modern History of Somalia</u> 4th edition, Oxford 2002.

[4] There has been no central government since Barre was overthrown in 1991.

[5] This has changed because of the civil war and the proportion of the population living in the cities has increased since 1991.

The infrastructure problems in Somalia, which in the beginning of 1990's were only a part of the political and cultural scenario, have today grown to become a humanitarian catastrophe.[6] This combined with a deteriorating security situation has made a peaceful resolution of the Somali conflict much more difficult to accomplish. The currently active Islamist networks in Somalia have come to play a key role in the future development of the country. It is mainly through them that the most successful and effective resistance is being channelled against the *Transitional Federal Government* (TFG) and foreign intervention.[7]

In this context it is also important to emphasize the local (and to some degree regional) connections between these networks. Even if the ICU/UIC (which is the most written about group) shares much of the same religious and ideological world views with the international Islamist networks -- i.e. the idea of a Califat as well as a critical attitude towards the secularized countries in the West -- the main reason for their involvement has to do with the character of local populations and is founded on a general dissatisfaction with the more specific local situations in Somalia. The solutions to the problem of violence, which these groups undeniably stand for, can only be dealt with through initiatives directed towards solving the security political problems and the humanitarian issues in Somalia -- which must be viewed separately from the greater regional and international questions.[8]

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[6] Menkhaus, Kenneth, Somali, <u>A Country in Peril, a Policy nightmare</u> ENOUGH Strategy Paper, September 2008

[7] Transitional Federal Government. The UN supported transitional government in Somalia, TFG, was formed in 2004 as a result of several years of attempts at reconciliation (supported by the UN) between the different groups in Somalia.

[8] For more about this: see i.e. Stevenson, Jonathan, <u>A New Approach to Somalia's Problems.</u> Transatlantic Issues No.12, March 2007. <u>www.transatlanticinstitute.org</u>. Furthermore see: **Conclusions**.

2 Background

During the last two decades, Somalia has been pulled deeper and deeper into internal conflict. The starting point for Somalia's decay as a state can be traced back to 1991 when the late President Siad Barre was removed from office by an Ethiopian supported coup d'état. Since that time, the political situation of the country has continually been in flux). The temporary (UN- supported) government in Somalia, also called the TFG, has as of today (October 2008) not been able to gain control of the country.

In early 2006, Somalia was thrown into a new stage of the civil war when Islamist groups launched a successful offensive. In September of 2006 the Islamist groups had surrounded the TFG in Kismayo and it seemed that the TFG's days were numbered. At this sensitive and crucial juncture, Ethiopia intervened, sending troops to support TFG. Although TFG's president, Abdullahai Yusuf, still officially has the power in the country, the Islamist resistance to the TFG has increased and regular combat has become a part of every-day life in large parts of Somalia.

The decreasing influence of the TFG combined with the growing difficulties of the AU-force (and for the Ethiopians) to manage the security of Mogadishu, has been impaired further by the conflict between President Yusuf and the TGF's prime minister, Hassan Hussein Nur "Adde".[9]

The present crisis was triggered by two incidents during 2006. In the beginning of that year a coalition of warlords was formed called the *Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism* (ARPCT). This was done with the support of the U.S. government whose purpose was to search and destroy a number of foreign AQ-agents who were reported to be in Mogadishu, and who were supported by a group called *shabaab*.[10] *Shabaab* came into conflict with the local Islamists who in a short time defeated ARPCT paving the way for the ICU's control of the main parts of southern and central Somalia.

Before this crisis there had been a split in the TFG between Yusuf, who was (and still is) extremely hostile towards the Islamists regardless of their ideological inclinations, and groups around the new Prime Minister, Nur "Adde".[11] Nur

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[9] Nur "Adde" took over from the TFG's first and extremely corrupt Prime Minister, Ghedi, at the end of 2007. Ibid note 6.

[10] Arabic for *the guys*

[11] (11) Ibid note 6.

"Adde" has, for the most part, been more inclined than president Yusuf to compromise with the Islamists.[12]

In June 2006, the ICU (which is an umbrella organization consisting of several Islamist groups with widely varied ideological inclinations) took control over a large part of the southern and central parts of Somalia. For approximately seven months the ICU managed to maintain a certain order and to create an embryo of an administration -- even the airport of Mogadishu was opened for traffic. In spite of its emphasis on *Sharia* law, there was strong support amongst those parts of the population who were benefitting from the changes, i.e., the decrease in violence and the restoration of basic services such as health care and schools. Another effect was that international aid could once again be received on a larger scale, which was, of course, beneficial to many Somalis.

The US government which was, as previously mentioned, partly behind the ICU's successes made huge efforts to begin peace negotiations between ICU and TFG aiming for a new government in Somalia which would include most of the groups active in the power struggle. But these attempts failed and after some time the inner tensions in ICU led to an Islamist radicalization of ICU. This was shown at home by a more strict interpretation of Koran and *Sharia* (with consequences for the everyday life of Somali people) and also by the taking of a much more hostile stance against Ethiopia and "the West". *Jihad* was declared against Ethiopia and the ICU openly supported militant groups who opposed Ethiopia, as well as received support (in the form of weapons and money) from Eritrea.[13]

The more hardcore groups within the ICU apparently did their best to provoke Ethiopia to take action at the same time as they openly supported international Islamists with connections to, for example, AQ. This contributed to the failure of the American attempts to bring about compromise. In December 2006, the Ethiopian forces invaded, quickly crushing the ICU and its allies, and took Mogadishu. Following this, they reinstated the TFG.

Ethiopia had, at this time, support from the US, however it was not a question of the U.S. commanding or even demanding an invasion. Ethiopia was already convinced that the ICU had to be stopped, if necessary by military means. The support they received from the USA (intelligence and diplomatic support) aided the operation but was not decisive. The plan, as it was formulated in Addis Ababa, was that a sudden invasion should be followed by a campaign by the AU. However, that never happened (the number of troops from AU which eventually

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[12] This group goes under the name "The Mogadishu group".
[13] Prendergast, John, Fifteen Years After Blackhawk Down: Somalia's Chance, ENOUGH Strategy Paper No: 18, April 2008.

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materialized consisted of only two thousand men - much too little to maintain control). Instead, the Ethiopian troops stayed on, supported by the security forces from the TFG which had been trained by Ethiopia.

After a few weeks, the resistance against the invasion took on a more organized character. What was in the beginning a purely Somali affair quickly became, through the Islamist resistance factor, a matter for the international Islamist movement (which was already present) thereby opening a new "frontline" in the war against "the West".

Since the beginning of 2007, the war has become worse and in many aspects the situation is more difficult now than it has been in a long time.[14] There are attacks or terrorist attacks nearly every day (perpetrated by all sides) and as expected, Ethiopia has been forced to keep their troops in Somalia. As a result, they are stuck in a potentially long-lasting conflict. In addition, the constant turmoil and violence has led to a radicalization of the population, which has been favourable for the hard core groups of Islamists.

As a consequence there has been a split both within the TFG and the ICU, by the increasingly bloody fighting at the end of 2007. As mentioned earlier the TFG had a new premier minister, Nur "Adde". This change in leadership led to new initiatives to recruit those elements of the ICU (and other Islamist groups) who were interested in a solution through compromise. At the same time, the more moderate ICU-leaders in exile created an umbrella organization together with Somali non-Islamist groups with the purpose of excluding extremists on both sides. This group is called *Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia* (ARS). Also see below). This in turn led *Shabaab, (*which had shortly after the Ethiopian invasion taken the lead in the resistance against the invasion), to break with the ARS-groups within ICU and to declare the groups to be "renegades" and therefore legitimate targets.

For the international community, the ARS and their allies has become a tool to work through, and in June 2008 they concluded a peace treaty in Djibouti between moderate leaders in ARS and the TFG.[15]

The settlement was finally signed on August 18th but it has not yet been implemented.[16] The difficulties regarding the implementation consist in large part because the signatories do not have control over the groups who represent most of the violence inside Somalia.

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[14] In Mogadishu over one third of the population been forced to flee from their homes. Ibid note 4.

[15] The ARS was then led by "the two Sharifs", Sheik Sharif Ahmed and Sheik Sharif Hassan.

[16] The settlement stipulates that all use of violence shall cease, a UN-force shall be deployed as well as the withdrawal of all Ethiopian troops.

Another problem with the Djibouti-treaty – and a potentially much more difficult problem to solve – is that both sides have encountered an increasingly radical resistance from the groups who are interested in thwarting the settlement. From the TFG's position, president Yusuf is prone to snipe at his own Prime Minister Nur "Adde" while from the ARS-side, the treaty has led *Shabaab* to swiftly increase the number of "enemies" going so far as to include aid staff workers from the West (and their Somali co-workers) as well as any operations that in the slightest way can be connected with "the West".

This also applies to the TFG. Accusations of corruption have followed the TFG from the start and have led to a decrease in Somali support for the TFG. This of course has occurred concurrently with the increase in violence and as the corruption has become more obvious.[17] The fact that since the invasion in December 2006, the TFG has also been forced not only to rely on Ethiopian troops but also on more or less violent gangs of bandits, has led to even sharper antagonisms.

Although dissatisfaction with the TFG (and the foreign troops and security forces who support them) is strong, it has not automatically meant stronger support for the Islamists who are fighting against the TFG. In fact to the contrary, as Somali citizens have suffered increasing violence from Islamist groups during the past year.

For the international community (with the UN at the top of the list) the Djibouti settlement has not been the beginning of a solution as was hoped for. Partly this is self inflicted. Above all, because the UN, through the UNDP, gives financial support to the security forces of TFG which are controlled by president Yusuf and the more compromise- prone groups around him. As a result, the UN is perceived as partisan and not as a neutral arbitrator. The project of building up the state -- which the Djibouti settlement was meant to be the cornerstone of -- on the contrary has weakened the more moderate groups around which the initiative must be built, in order to become a reality. One part of the UN's work toward a peaceful solution obviously includes support for the moderate forces around Nur "Adde" and the ARS (with the special envoy Oulod-Abdullah). Simultaneously another part of the UN's work – above all UNDP – consists of rearming the resistance around Yusuf.[18] The present situation wherein the

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[17] The TFG has since its inception been populated by warlords who have used chauffeurs, bodyguards and relatives to cover posts in the TFG and in the exile parliament that has been instated. There are parallels here, with the situation in Afghanistan after 2001. Ibid note 4 as well as interviews with exiled Somalis by the author in Addis Ababa in February and November 2007. Names and details have been withheld for reasons of security. Additional information can be obtained through the author.

[18] It can be said here that the Ethiopian government seems quite well aware of this and it has during the summer of 2008 put strong pressure on Yusuf to accept the Djibouti treaty.

Djibouti-treaty is signed but not implemented, has been a difficult setback to the peace process which both the UN and the other signatories of the treaty had hoped for.

This situation has deteriorated even more as a result of the radicalization of the Islamist factions. When the U.S. in March 2008 placed *Shabaab* on the list of terrorist groups, this significantly strengthened the positions of *Shabaab* and their allied groups against the more moderate forces in Somalia. At the same time, a stronger bond to the international Jihad-groups was created, which could facilitate the importing of more weapons and recruits as well as bring in increased supplies of money.[19] A consequence of this has been that the fairly moderate forces (such as "the two Sharifs" and the groups around ARS) have been marginalized even more from the politics inside Somalia, thus making it even more difficult to reach out to those parts of the radical network who might be interested in compromise.

Another effect of these political manoeuvres has been that the radical Islamists inside Somalia, after being put on the terrorist list, have responded with an open attack on any and all groups or individuals who have the slightest connection to "the West" or the TFG. This has meant that a great number of civilians - active within humanitarian aid in different NGO's - were killed and that their organizations were forced to stop their activities. Kidnapping and extortion also contributed to decreased activity or stopped it altogether.[20]

The net result of these events, both inside and outside of Somalia, has led to stagnation of the international peace process. Other factors which have contributed to this deadlock in the peace and state rebuilding process, is in part that (as touched upon previously) the UN's special envoy – Ould-Abdullah – has not had the opportunity to act as a neutral mediator. At the same time another part of the UN (UNDP) continues its support of TFG by providing money for the security forces which are in fact behind much of the violence which is presently so characteristic of Somalia. In addition, the groups who constitute the most central parts of the peace process – moderate Islamists and the circle around the prime minister Nur "Adde" – are today much weaker than the radical forces on both sides. These factors connect closely to each other: a successful peace process calls for reinforcement of the moderate political parts of TFG and the opposition while at the same time calling for a marginalization of the radical forces and that support to arm the remaining radical groups stop.

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[19] Ibid note 15 as well as Napoleoni, Loretta, Terror Inc.: <u>Tracing the Money Behind Global Terrorism.</u> Penguin Books, London, 2004
[20] International Herald Tribune, 21/7/2008

3 Islamist Networks/Groups[21]

The following is a survey of the most prominent and influential Islamist groups, which have been discussed above, as well as of some of the key individuals in these groups. In this context it must be observed that the security situation in Somalia makes it difficult, if not impossible, to get information and also makes it difficult to verify certain information. Furthermore, the situation is extremely changeable and new Islamist organizations and networks are formed, branch off or fade out totally depending on internal developments. The reader should therefore have in mind that the following information can change quickly.

The study includes only Islamist organizations and/or networks which promote and/or use (or have used) violence to reach their political goals.

It should also be pointed out that these Islamist networks, even if they have had (or have) ties to the international Jihadist network, largely run more locally based political groups. The traditional Somali society, with its suspiciousness toward strangers and tightly knitted clan-based structures, can make it difficult for foreigners to establish themselves.[22] Other factors in this context which make it difficult for international Jihadists to function in Somalia include the traditional, moderate Sufi form of Islamism that is often practised in Somalia, as well as the fact that wide spread anarchy and the lack of efficient central administration make it equally dangerous and difficult for foreign Jihadists to act in Somalia, as well as for other factions.[23]

3.1 Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) aka. Islamic Courts Union (ICU)

The ICU, which has existed in one form or another since 2000, first became a well known name within terrorist circles in the beginning of 2006, when the organization through a blitz offensive nearly managed to take control of all of southern and central Somalia. If Ethiopia had not intervened, the ICU's

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[21] Most of the Islamist groups/networks which have appeared in Somalia since 1991 are not at all violence prone, but directed towards *Da'wa*, i.e. missionary and social work. Therefore they are not included in this study.

[22] ICG-Report No.100, December 2005 and note 3.

[23] For these international Islamist/Jihadist groups Kenya has proved to be much more suitable for setting up cells and networks. One example of this is that the planning and accumulation of means for the terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania against the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam in August 1998, as well as the terrorist attacks against Israeli targets in 2002 in Mombasa, largely took place in Nairobi

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attempted coup very likely would have succeeded. The ICU had its roots in another violence prone organization, *al-littihaad al-Islamismi* (AIAI). The AIAI (founded in 1984) became known after the downfall of the Barre regime in 1991 and swiftly spread its ideas about a greater Islamist state to the Horn of Africa (including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia). During this early stage, AIAI was led by Sheikh Ali Warsame, who soon became known as a "moderate" extremist. There are people close to him who proclaim that Warsame indeed was against the use of violence in spite of his being the founder of AIAI. In the beginning of the nineties, Warsame also personally recruited Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys (later on leader of the ICU) to the AIAI. From this period and onward, the AIAI's prime target was Ethiopia where the organization had established operations in the capital, Addis Ababa during 2005.[24]

The ICU consists of eleven separate Courts which theoretically make their own decisions about Sharia, the economy, etc., based on local conditions. At the same time there are strong connections between the Courts and the clan interests. All but one of the eleven Courts are controlled by one clan, *Hawiye*. Although the AIAI and the ICU are two different organizations, the latter apparently have their roots in the AIAI. There are also signs that the AIAI created "The Courts", which the ICU is sometimes called, but lost control when more and more "Courts" were established. Thus the current ICU emerged from the AIAI. The ICU managed in a short time to incorporate a sizeable number of the AIAI's members into its own ranks.[25] This is largely due to Sheik Aweys, who has established himself as a skillful, capable and charismatic leader, as well as a military strategist. Aweys was, among other things, behind the blitz offensive in Mogadishu.

In contrast to other Islamist leaders, Sheik Aweys has a relatively thorough military education and has a background (as a colonel) in the former Somali army which was dissolved in the civil war following the downfall of Siad Barre 1991(26).[26] Aweys has since then received more education in several of the many camps that existed in Afghanistan before 2001. At the same time, Sheik Aweys has taken great pains to transmit a religious message. Aweys is the chairman of the ICU's Highest Council. His Wahabian religious education has led him to a puritanistic, Salafistic interpretation of Sharia law. His religious and

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[24] West, Sunguta, <u>Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islamismi</u>, Terrorism Monitor, Volume 4, Issue 15, July 27, 2006.

[25] (25) The AIAI did not, however, entirely disappear because of the ICU's more dominant position. Instead the split within the AIAI between the Somali faction and the faction which operated from Ogaden (the Somali speaking part of Ethiopia), became more and more obvious. When the AIAI was classified as a terrorist organization in 2001, the Somali part of the AIAI detached itself from the more radical Ogaden-based part.

[26] For example, Aweys took part in the Ogaden war against Ethiopia 1977-78

military background has associated him with al-Qaeda and he is today wanted by the US. There are also connections between the ICU and other terrorist branded organizations, among them Hezbollah. There were many ICU hangers-on in the ranks of Hezbollah during the summer war with Israel in 2006.[27]

Officially the aim of the ICU is to found an Islamist state without regard to ethnicity on the Horn of Africa. This means implementing detailed Sharia law according to the Wahabi/Salafist interpretation of the creed. This system can be likened to what exists in Saudi Arabia where stoning, dismembering and decapitation are punishments exacted according to the law and executed by Sharia judges. The ICU takes the cultural aspect of an Islamist state further. For example, the organization prohibited the population of Mogadishu from watching TV-broadcasts of the world soccer championship in Germany in 2006.

After the Ethiopian invasion in 2006, the ICU's internal split (noted previously) led to an increase in Aweys' radical group activities within Eritrea. At the same time, the "two Sharifs" have tried to join together with the more moderate parts of TFG.

> *Shabaab ul-Mujahediin also known as Ash-Shabaab.aka.hizbu sh-Shabaab aka. Mujahediin Youth Movement (MYM) aka. Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations (PRM) aka. Harakat Shabab Al-Mujahideen (The Movement of Jihadi Youth, MJY).*

Just as the ICU developed from AIAI, *ash-Shabaab* developed from the ICU. When the ICU's short lived regime was stopped by Ethiopian troops in the autumn of 2006, most of the members of *ash-Shabaab* went underground. The majority of these had belonged to an armed group led by Aden Hashi Farah aka Ayro under ICU which was called *Hizb ish-Shaabaab aka. Harakat Shabab Al-Mujahideen (the Movement of Jihadi Youth, MJY)* This group had, like Aweys' group, received military training in Afghanistan before 2001. Following the death of Ayros, Sheik Mukhtar Robow Mansour aka, Abu Mansour and Sheik Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki took over the leadership of *Ash-Shabaab*. Both Abu Mansour and al-Turki have experiences from Afghanistan where Abu Mansour took part in combat units on the side of the Taliban during the ongoing civil war. Both Ayro and Abu Mansour were born in the 60's and have a thorough and deep religions education.[28] Abu Mansour has connections to the Saudian welfare organization, *al-Haramein,* which has been accused of supporting terrorism.

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[27] See among others BBC Monitoring Service, July 6, 2006

[28] Here we should note, considering the security situation in Somalia, that it is rather unusual for the population to have any form of higher education. Both Ayro and Abu Mansour have, however, high levels of theological education, in part from Somalia, which is extraordinary.

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This is accordingly a very radical Islamist group with strong ties to the international Jihadist movement. Mansour signs his communiqués with references to a global Califat and declares his loyalty to Osama Bin-Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

In the beginning of 2008, Abu Mansour declared that *ash-Shabaab* no longer belonged to the ICU. Abu Mansour made this statement at the Islamist forum, al-ekhlaas.info (the salvation), a well known forum for discussion amongst international Jihadists and other Islamist spokesmen for violence.

The reason for this enormous public split seems to be that the ICU has not wanted to include foreign Jihadists in its organization. Furthermore, Abu Mansour accused the ICU's leadership of being too secular and nationalistic in its political agenda. *Ash-Shabaab* promotes a more genuine Muslim organization with a clear goal: a greater Islamist state on the Horn of Africa. Abu Mansour has accused the ICU of abandoning this goal. The ICU is also accused of receiving support from Eritrea, a country which, according to Abu Mansour, will never defend the Jihadist's interests.[29] Mansour's distrust of Eritrea also became apparent when *ash-Shaabab* boycotted the Asmara Conference.[30] It is obvious that Abu Mansour wants to move *ash-Shabaab* toward a more international agenda. In the same declaration on the al-ekhlaas forum, he added: "*We follow the pure ideology belonging to bin Laden, az-Zawahiri and az-Zarqawi*".[31] When the U.S. branded *ash-Shabaab* as terrorist in the publication *Foreign Terrorist Organizations* (FTO), it was welcomed by the organization in another Islamist forum in April of 2008. In the same month, *ash-Shabaab's* leader was killed in an American bomb raid. This has given Abu Mansour more power in the organization. Apparently a more definite international Jihadist agenda can be expected.

3.2 Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS)

The ARS was founded in connection with the Asmara Conference in September 2007 and appeared as a consequence of the split that had occurred within the ICU after the invasion in 2006.[32] The leader of this group was to be the former executive chairman of the ICU, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.[33] Very little is known about the

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[29] MEMRI Special Dispatch Series – No. 1838, February 12, 2008.

[30] The conference was held in September 2007 as an attempt to unite the different "opposition groups" in Somalia. The ICU took part but not *Ash-Shabaab*. Ibid note 23.

[31] Ibid note 29.

[32] Sharif Sheik Ahmed is leader in name only, but in reality Sheik Hassan is the leader of the ARS.

[33] Thus, the designation "The two Sharifs". See also under the chapter B*ackground*.

ARS' long term goals, but it is obvious that they see Ethiopia's retreat from Somalia as the prime orientation of the group's activities. Sheikh Ahmed has however been known to dissociate himself from Salafistic and Qutbistic ideals as religious interpretations.[34] Even then there are questions about the activities and goals of the organization considering that the ARS has after all been branded as a terrorist organization.

The persons who were arrested in the beginning of 2008 in Sweden and Norway on suspicion of terrorist crime in Somalia were suspected among others to have partially financed the activities that were carried out by the ARS.

Recent developments indicate that the ARS has begun to approach a more purely political agenda. On the ninth of June in 2008, the ARS signed a truce with the TFG which was set to last for 30 days. It was however extended to 90 days, and then extended once again to 120 days. At an earlier stage, Sheikh Ahmed had also indicated that he supported an eventual UN mission presence in Somalia. Sheikh Ahmed's break with the ICU however had raised bad blood with his former allies within the ICU (and *ash-shabaab*). As a result, the ARS may lose those members who want to maintain the politics of radical violence against Ethiopia, the UN and the U.S.

3.3 Minor Groups

As we pointed out earlier in this report, the arena of Jihadists in Somalia is very transient. That has led to the formation of a large number of minor and more short-lived groups some of which are still active in one form or another. Most of them are clan based and are looked upon by the clan as a way of increasing authority through a Jihadist "label".

Al-Takfir wa L-Hijra (literally, "excommunication and migration") has also been active in Somalia but because of its more universal inclinations – with its focus on "Islamist world revolution" – it has been difficult for *Al-Takfir* to penetrate Somali society. Those followers who remain have probably looked for other groups. *Al-Takfir* seems to have had little theological or ideological influence on Somali society.

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[34] Safism and Qutbism are the main ideologies to advocate Islamist use of violence. These movements are the foundation of the international Islamist activities in many countries.

Types of socialist-Jihadist groups have also been active in Somalia since the downfall of the Barre regime. One example is al-Islah (literally "reform"). The relatively well educated members of this group vanished quickly from the scene when the situation deteriorated further. Today *Al-Islah* has few, if any, members who are active on an organizational level.

4   Conclusion

In summary, one can say that the security problems of Somalia are tied closely to the failure of the international community's initiative to build a state. As previously noted these failures – which have been repeated during the fifteen years of attempts at reconciliation – are usually caused specifically by the very idea of a central administration in Mogadishu which has never been a functioning model in Somalia. The clan based decentralised and traditional structure which has been at the core of the political and social construction of Somalia before, during and after the civil war has never been seriously integrated with the idea of a centrally built state administration.[35]

Furthermore, a consequence of the international community's support of the TFG as the sole, acceptable alternative to the political solution in Somalia has been that they have overlooked the fact that the TFG – as viewed by the Somali population -- is only one more agent of violence. The concentration on the TFG as the sole alternative capable of governing has not worked out. Not even the military assistance from Ethiopia has enabled the TFG to gain control over certain parts of Somalia. Furthermore, no new strategy has been formulated.

It is in this light that one must examine the rise and subsequent downfall of the ICU (and other Islamist networks). These networks have, as represented in the study, always existed and are derived from a traditional model for administration, adapted to a social and political structure based on a population dominated by nomadic and agricultural economies.

This has changed somewhat since 1991 when the civil war (which has continued since that time) led to the destruction of many social and political structures. But the basic model with local and more traditional structures – loosely connected by a Sunni-, Sufi- Muslim identity – has always existed.[36]

The more violently inclined of these networks have also to a great extent "imported" their viewpoints and models of interpretations from the Arabic Peninsula, and largely from international Islamists. This becomes very obvious

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[35] The clan is the most important building block of Somali society. Practically every single individual is identified by its adherence to a clan family. The clan also directs social norms and personal identity. Although Islam has a "horizontal" identity – which cuts across clan identity - the Somali version of Islam has generally been clan based. This international Islamisation has led to the clans themselves splitting into sub-clans which fight against each other.

[36] It is important to underline the fact that religious identity – which traditionally has been pragmatic and resistant against more orthodox and rigid movements, emanating from the GCC-countries – has always been adapted to its social, traditional and cultural structures. That is, religion has been subordinated to other factors of identity.

when one studies how the international Jihadism movement – i.e. the violent part of Islamism – has gained a foothold in Somalia since 1990.[37] This happened in two periods, both of them during the critical phase of the civil war.

The first phase was between 1990 and 1992. This was at the end of the fighting which had led to the downfall of the dictator Siad Barre and coincided with Osama bin-laden and AQ's establishment of a presence in the Sudan. Parts of the Islamist resistance against Barre had by that time gathered within the AIAI and thus had formed an organizational framework which could be infiltrated by foreign Islamists. The reasons for the foreign Jihadist interest in Somalia were twofold: the UN-led operations UNOSOM I and II and its predecessor, the US-led humanitarian intervention UNITAF (December 1992 – May 1993). These two events created a clearly defined "enemy" to fight against, who furthermore "occupied" a Muslim country.

AQ could now use its wounded AIAI as a channel in the already rather wasted and anarchistic Somalia. They established themselves rather swiftly as a channel for the Islamists in Somalia and could provide themselves with weapons and materials to conduct the struggle, both against Barre and later on against other Somali groups. This attempt to internationalize the conflict in Somalia thoroughly failed. Partly because the foreign Islamists who infiltrated were poorly orientated to the conditions in Somali and thus misunderstood and misjudged the special priorities of the different clans, for which international Jihadism was not the most important thing to engage in. This conclusion was derived from confiscated documents where activists report on the difficulties they had encountered in Somalia. Quite often the remarks are made in a racist tone, coupled with impatience with the "primitive" Somalis who cannot under-stand the international ideologies of the Jihadists.[38]

Another reason for the failure of the first wave of internationalization was that the internal Islamists were defeated on the battleground by their enemies during the civil war. With that, the international Islamists had lost their best entrance to Somalia.

The second wave of attempts to use Somalia to spread global Jihadism began in 2000 and can be said to have reached a blind alley at the start of the Ethiopian invasion in December of 2006.

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[37] The following description is based on sources of intelligence and interviews the author has done during service in UNOSOM II at the beginning of 1994 as well as on sources from the present time. Also see ICG-Report No.100, December 2005.

[38] Ibid note 37.

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At the beginning of 2000, the ICU more and more came to be the central agent in Somalia and the leader of resistance against the warlords who ravaged the country. From 2000 to the beginning of 2006, this had led to a succession of Somali leaders – as for example Hassan Dahir Aweys – with obvious national ambitions, absorbing more and more of the international Jihad. This took place from a genuine pragmatic standpoint; one could obtain weapons, recruits and money this way. But also in part because the fifteen years of warfare had eroded the internal resistance against the international Jihadism, as practised by, for example, AQ ideologues.

Following the ICU's takeover in May 2006, an internal split came about and the more hardcore forces took power. Once again the Jihadists had miscalculated and misjudged their own strength against other agents in Somalia and even more against the more and more frustrated Ethiopians (see previous chapter ***Background***).[39] However, what was not misjudged was that the force of the movement was sufficient to avoid a total collapse of the resistance against the TFG. For the international Islamists who had received support and protection from parts of the ICU, the war of 2006 became a serious setback; many were killed or taken prisoners and a large amount were forced to flee again, at first to Kenya but from there also to Eritrea and other neighbouring countries. By and large the result was that the situation in Somalia once again slipped back to become an internal affair, with only sporadic international actions by foreign Jihadists. One effect of these attempts to make Somalia into another "frontline" in the war against "the West" is that since 1990 the number of international Jihadists has increased, with the result that internal conflicts have become more intense.[40]

What this will lead to is yet unknown. While this is being written (October 2008) the Islamists in Somalia are a very much split and diversified lot, with the potential both to become a bridge to other Somali agents who are working towards a peaceful solution, but also to a high degree to constitute a virtual obstacle to exactly that type of development. This also depends on which way the international community chooses to support Somalia. As shown in this study, that question is far from concluded. Not only has one to create a solid strategy which can work out in Somalia. It is also imperative that this strategy is right and will be integrated in a reasonable way between the different agents who are active today. These problems have not yet been solved.[41]

Finally, it is also a fact that these policy problems (and the attending humanitarian problems) which confront Somalia are closely tied to security problems.

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[39] For example, they failed completely to take over Somalia.
[40] See above about ICU and ARS.
[41] Ibid note 6.

These security problems can be summarized under four headlines, which are interconnected with each other.

- Security for the TFG.
- Security for the UN and the active humanitarian organizations which are to be reintegrated into a future Somalia.
- Security for Ethiopia and its own regional security structure.
- The US's counter terrorism policy.

These four overlapping security agendas direct much of the political development inside Somalia today, as well as determining where the main portion of funding for Somalia is placed. Taking this into account, resources earmarked for the Somali civil population are also used for other purposes, at the same time as some parts of these externally initiated security interests counteract other political initiatives.

4.1 TFG

To facilitate the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia and at the same time to strengthen the TFG's position, the UN, under the initiative of the U.S., has made efforts to arrange for an international peacekeeping force. So far this effort has not completely succeeded. With the disastrous campaign of 1993-94 as a background, it has been impossible to provide enough troops. During 2007 there were efforts to deploy an AU-force, but it never reached the eight thousand troops which had been planned.[42] The force is too small to accomplish more than to defend some installations of the TFG and to defend itself. There are no resources available for active peace keeping work. A consequence of this is that Ethiopian forces have been forced to stay on in Mogadishu.

The UN has made some attempts to exchange – or strengthen – the AU-force with a UN led force of the same kind. But thus far, it has been impossible to convince other countries to raise more troops. In addition, there is no consensus about how an eventual mandate should be shaped. This is a critical point: the mandate for the AU-forces has been problematic simply because it means the TFG must take a direct standpoint. As has been pointed out earlier, the TFG in the eyes of many Somalis, if not all, is viewed as one of many agents operating in Somalia. And further, they are seen as an agent whose security forces have been behind a large part of the illegal violence that has plagued the country for many years. This means that the AU is perceived as partisan instead of being an objec-

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[42] Today there are no more than two thousand troops from the AU in Somalia. Most are in Mogadishu and have been reduced to guarding TFG's government buildings.

tive and neutral promoter of peace.[43] Consequently, an eventual UN mandate must be written, clearly stating that the UN is neutral and that its forces have a mandate (and the resources) to *actively* protect the civil population and engage in humanitarian reconstruction.

Even if perchance such a force was assembled, there is still no certainty it would be strong enough to ensure sufficient protection and "muscles" for an interim government in Mogadishu to seriously begin the meaningful work of recon-struction. Additionally this assumes that the TFG could become sufficiently representative of the civilian population to be seen as something more than "one of many agents". A UN force would also make it possible to give Ethiopia an excuse to withdraw its troops (which Addis Ababa has openly declared itself willing to do as soon as possible). Without the Ethiopian army, the TFG would quickly be driven out of Mogadishu.

4.2   UN and NGO:s

Somalia is presently a very dangerous country for UN workers and NGO's.[44] At the same time, there is intense pressure on humanitarian organisations to continue their work and to regain lost territory. The humanitarian crisis in Somalia is nearly as bad now as it was during 1990 and 1991 when the Somali population was faced with starvation.[45] Without a robust international presence it is doubtful whether the TFG (in a shape more acceptable to the Somali civil population) will ever receive the authorization it needs to function as planned.

The basic problem today seems to be the balance between the need for security and the necessity for an obvious presence (inside Somalia), a problem which different agencies within the UN agencies are trying to solve. The two agencies in the foreground are the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) – which decides how, where and if UN-staff will and can travel to Somalia – and the UN Political Office for Somalia. The latter plans to move their operations from Nairobi to Somalia as soon as possible. This is important in order to nourish the impression of an active international community and also to convey the image of a relatively secure Somalia. It is obvious that this is connected with security at large and that the goal has not quite been reached.

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[43] This picture is supported by the repeated attacks on the AU (and the TFG) during the summer and early autumn of 2008.
[44] Ibid note 20.
[45] Ibid note 5.

4.3   Ethiopia

Ethiopia is at present the most important of Somalia's external agents. This refers not only to the fact that Ethiopian troops now occupy parts of the country. Of even greater importance is Ethiopia's own position from a regional perspective. From that angle, it refers to how the country must orientate itself toward several threatening scenarios. The proportions of the "threat" (as seen from Addis Ababa) extend to local guerrillas, hostile neighbours (foremost Eritrea) and radical Islamists. To prevent these threats from growing stronger represents much of Ethiopia's policy in the region.

The Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December of 2006 can above all be explained by fears that radical Islamists, with the support of Eritrea (which already supports armed insurgents inside Ethiopia) could seriously constitute a threat to Ethiopia. After nearly two years of bleeding – money, troops and international good will – it is obvious that the government of Addis Ababa must prioritize the withdrawal of troops and that this must happen as soon as possible. It is doubtful that the invasion and the resulting occupation have given Ethiopia any greater security.[46] How the Ethiopian government chooses to handle its security interests in Somalia in the near future will determine whether other external agents could succeed or fail in their future political initiatives. Of special interest is the continuing support of the TFG. As shown earlier, Ethiopia has put pressure on President Yussuf to bring about a compromise with his prime minister and the more moderate Islamists in the ARS. However, if Addis Ababa chooses to withdraw its support for the TFG before another form of security can be put in place, a large part of the stability necessary to manage a long term humanitarian commitment in Somalia will be lost.

It is still not clear what actions Ethiopia will ultimately take. There is an obvious dissatisfaction with the international community in Addis Ababa, even if it is apparent that most participants have the same goal: a stabilized and peaceful Somalia. This dissatisfaction focuses on the criticism that has been directed against Ethiopia's campaigns in Somalia. At the same time these same critics have supported an intervention. Finally it is also a fact that Ethiopia's national decisions may not always concur with the opinions of the international community. Unfortunately, it is apparent that this conflict will continue for a considerable length of time.

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[46] Ibid.

4.4 The U.S. Government's Counter Terrorism Policy

In the debate over the recent developments in Somalia, there has been a tendency to link the policies of the U.S. together with those of Ethiopia, with Ethiopia seen as a "client state" of the superpower America. However, this is not the case. The U.S. government's counter terrorist policy, as it applies to Somalia, is focused primarily on eliminating or capturing wanted Islamists and to preventing Somalia from becoming a haven for international Jihadists. The scope of Ethiopia's considerations (see previous chapter) regarding Somalia are broader and are focused rather more on regional matters. In fact, the relationship between the U.S. and Ethiopia has often been both tense and troublesome.[47] However, that is not to say that Washington and Addis Ababa do not share common interests and goals. After the Ethiopian invasion, the Ethiopian forces situated in Somalia have become the new eyes and ears of the U.S. government in Mogadishu.[48] The two countries also agree on the importance of preventing a radicalization of the Islamists in Somalia.

The U.S. has carried out its counter terrorist policy both with high tech (as in the attack by tomahawk missiles in April of 2008 which killed Aden Hashi Ayro) and by cooperation with local warlords who have been paid to control and follow suspected terrorists. The aforementioned ARCTP was one such coalition, set up with surveillance as its foremost goal.

It should also be pointed out that even if Ethiopia had been assigned a role in the counter terrorism policy of the U.S. after the invasion in 2006, the policy of the U.S. operates independently of the agenda of the TFG. Individual leaders within the TFG's security forces have acted independently toward the political direc-tives of the TFG and have continued to be rather independent of these political directives themselves**.** This has also led to problems, both for the TFG and for the U.S. The policy of the U.S. when it comes to counter terrorism is not foremost, if at all, a way of reconstructing the state. It could be argued that this policy in some cases has obviously been counter productive in relationship to the policies of the U.S .Foreign Ministry via the UN, in its efforts to find a more inclusive role for the TFG. These initiatives have been partly subverted, at the same time as the U.S. has strengthened some of the more relentless elements of the TFG's security forces, those forces which represent a large part of the resistance against the attempts of Prime Minister Nur "Addes" to come to terms with moderate Islamists.

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ethiopia also received support from the U.S. mainly through intelligence and the use of air power.

This has also led to an upsurge in anti-Americanism within Somalia, which is to the advantage of the already convincing Jihadists, who have for a long time tried to persuade Somalia's Islamists to take on a greater role in the global Jihad they are working towards.

In the complex and confused state which exists inside Somalia today, it is relatively easy for Jihadists to manipulate the dissatisfaction felt by large parts of the Somali population towards the occupation. Furthermore when the US-lead security forces are often guilty of killing civilians this creates another opportunity to put the blame for the increasing violence on the superpower USA which in addition supports Ethiopia. Tactical and short sighted advances by the killings or the imprisonment of certain wanted international Islamists has thus led to more long term disadvantages for the U.S. where the result may be that these same radical Islamists and their ideologies are in fact strengthened rather than weakened.

Taken together, these humanitarian crises and security problems create a complex blend which every agent in and outside of Somalia must relate to and understand. As shown by the study, there are no "quick cures" nor is there a common strategy to solve the problems of Somalia today.

The great challenge for the international community will be to unite with its Somali counterparts to find such a strategy, balance the different political ambitions and realize that regardless of what course they agree upon regarding Somali and its current civil strife, the commitment must be a long lasting one.

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