

Report

**Somalia: Security and conflict in the south**



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## SUMMARY

The general security situation in Somalia remains volatile. The Transitional Federal Government still has limited control. Even though al-Shabaab withdrew from most of Mogadishu early August 2011, they are still in control of large parts of south and central Somalia. Since February 2011, TFG forces and their allies appear to be making headway and winning territories. However, while the TFG and the AMISOM forces may be able to hold a portion of seized territory, they lack the immediate means to rebuild infrastructure and provide governance.

While the Somali people continue to face mainly localized conflict, the humanitarian situation is catastrophic, according to the UN. 1.4 million Somalis are internally displaced, and about 3,7 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. Several international aid organisations were banned by al-Shabaab until a spokesman in June declared that they would be allowed to operate in areas controlled by al-Shabaab, but this statement was later withdrawn.

The UN has declared famine in the Lower Shebelle region, the Afgoye corridor, Bakool region, and Balaad and Adale districts in the Middle Shabelle region. Famine has also been declared within the IDP community in Mogadishu.

## SAMMENDRAG

Sikkerhetssituasjonen i deler av Sør-Somalia er fortsatt vanskelig. Overgangsmyndighetene har begrenset kontroll, og store deler av det sørlige Somalia kontrolleres fortsatt av al-Shabaab, men TFG og deres allierte har vunnet en del territorium, blant annet i Gedo-regionen, og i begynnelsen av august 2011 trakk al-Shabaab seg ut av størstedelen av Mogadishu.

Den humanitære situasjonen er katastrofal i flere deler av landet, ifølge FN. Ca. 1,4 millioner somaliere er internt fordrevne. Man regner dessuten med at ca. 3,7 millioner mennesker har behov for matvarehjelp. Flere internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner har i lengre tid vært utestengt av al-Shabaab, men i juni bekjente en talsmann for bevegelsen at hjelpeorganisasjoner vil få adgang for å yte nødhjelp. Få dager senere dementerte Shabaab sitt tidligere utspill og sa at hjelpeorganisasjoner som tidligere var forvist, ikke ville få adgang.

FN har erklært hungersnød i Nedre Shabelle, Afgoye-korridoren, Balaad og Adaale distriktene i Midtre Shabelle og deler av Bakool-regionen. De intern fordrevne i Mogadishu er også kategorisert som rammet av hungersnøden

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on security conditions in southern Somalia, with an emphasis on the situation in Mogadishu. The situation in southern Somalia, particularly Mogadishu, however, is unstable, and the balance of power in provinces, districts and urban districts can change in the course of a few days. The information and analysis in this paper relating to area control may therefore quickly become outdated. It is also difficult to get a complete, objective picture of what is happening in much of southern Somalia. International observers have no access to those parts of the country controlled by the Shabaab, and in other areas, there is no comprehensive or systematic reporting of, for example, human rights violations (see Chapter 3).

To produce as balanced and representative a picture of the relevant issues as possible, the information in this report has been collected from various sources. The report is partly based on publicly available information in the form of printed and online publications, and partly on interviews with representatives of UN agencies, international organisations, Somali organisations and Somali experts in Nairobi in March 2011. This information-gathering trip was conducted in cooperation with representatives of the Swedish Migration Authority, which has published a separate report (Migration Authority 2011).

All of our interlocutors have been informed that the information they provided would be made public. Most sources consented to this, but many of them did not wish to be quoted by name or position. By agreement with them, they will be referred to anonymously. They have been omitted from the reference list in order to avoid recognition.

Landinfo would like to thank First Secretary Dag Petterson and the staff at the Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi for their valuable help in identifying parties it would be useful to meet and for organising the stay of Landinfo and the Swedish Migration Agency's representatives.

## 2. THE GENERAL SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION

Unpredictability and cyclic conflict have affected southern Somalia for years, and the political and military situation, according to well-informed observers, is still very complex (interviews in Nairobi, March 2011). Large parts of southern Somalia are still controlled by al-Shabaab.<sup>1</sup> The long talked about military offensive against al-Shabaab, which began in February 2011, has, according to some international observers, been successful, particularly in Mogadishu, where most of the al-Shabaab forces have withdrawn. The situation is unstable, and the question is how quickly

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<sup>1</sup> Fear is an important explanation for Shabaab's control of southern Somalia. The group to a large extent controls only important hubs (access points) in Somalia.

AMISOM<sup>2</sup> and TFG can secure the areas Shabaab has left - and not just fill the administrative vacuum left by them, but also provide services to citizens.

When asked about security in southern Somalia, especially in the light of the military offensive, a representative of an international organisation explained to Landinfo in Nairobi in March 2011 that most Somalis have had a quite different view of this offensive than the international community. This view was shared by other observers. For most Somalis the offensive (outside Mogadishu) does not mean a dramatic change; people have seen that positions and settlements have been captured, lost and recaptured several times before. But if AMISOM/TFG forces do establish real control in Mogadishu, it could change the situation in the TFG's favour.

The military offensive has been coordinated and supported by both Ethiopia and Kenya. The fighting in Gedo and parts of the Juba Valley has led to the TFG-allied militias gaining ground in this province.

Shabaab is weakened, but the retreat from Mogadishu does not imply that the movement is defeated.

The military conflicts have primarily affected the civilian population - both in the parts of Mogadishu, where fighting has been continuous, and in other strategically important cities and towns. Outside these areas, the main challenge for the civilian population has been the serious humanitarian situation. This assessment was shared by well-informed observers and Somalia-watchers in Nairobi in March 2011. The drought that plague the Horn of Africa has also hit Somalia particularly hard, and more and more drought-and famine-stricken persons are flooding to Mogadishu, as well as the overcrowded refugee camps in north-eastern Kenya. On 19 July the UN declared a famine in Lower Shabelle, and parts of Bakool region.<sup>3</sup> In August, it declared a famine in the Balaad and Adaale districts of Central Shabelle, in the Afgoye corridor and among the internally displaced people in Mogadishu (FSNAU 2011d).

Despite the weakening of Shabaab TFG has not succeeded in gaining a military advantage outside Mogadishu. The government army is still struggling with a lack of coordination in the command and control structure. This is preventing the TFG from gaining a military advantage and keeping the territory captured.

Although fear and distrust are typical of many people's attitudes to Shabaab, they have had some support among minority groups, including the Jareer population in Lower Shabelle, and in smaller clans who see the opportunity to get the influence they did not have through an alliance with Shabaab. Local alliances and the divide and rule approach are securing Shabaab continued control in many counties and districts. Every three months, for example the administration in the provinces changes control, clan affiliation is secondary and nobody is in position long enough to establish strong ties with local people (interview in Nairobi, March 2010 and

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<sup>2</sup> AMISOM is the peacekeeping force from the African Union, consisting in August 2011 of approximately 9,000 soldiers, mainly from Uganda and Burundi. At full strength, the force consists of 12,000 soldiers (UN Security Council 2011).

<sup>3</sup> A situation of widespread hunger is defined as famine, when more than 30% of children under five are acutely malnourished, more than 20% of the population experience extreme food shortages and on average four or more children per 10,000 die every day.

March 2011). The question is whether the drought and famine that have hit areas where Shabaab is in control, and where they have refused most international organisations access, are undermining the support they have.

## **2.1 POLITICAL SITUATION**

The political situation has been marked by the internal power struggle between President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and the spokesman for parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan. The antagonism between them has partially paralysed government work.<sup>4</sup> The authorities also described the vast majority of observers as incompetent, weak and corrupt. After the conclusion of the Kampala Agreement on 9 June this year, Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed had to resign, and on 23 June he was replaced by Deputy Prime Minister and Planning Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali. Mohamed's departure led to strong reactions among many Somalis, and there were a number of supporting demonstrations in Mogadishu (Gettleman 2011, Shabelle Media Network 2011b).

## **2.2 HUMANITARIAN SITUATION**

The political, security and humanitarian situations are very closely interconnected in Somalia, as in most other conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian organisations cannot gain access on the ground without a relatively satisfactory security situation, and according to the UN an estimated 3.7 million Somalis need humanitarian assistance. This is an increase of 35% (from 2.4 million) during the last six months. So far in 2011 far more people have been driven from their homes because of drought than by conflict (OCHA 2011f).

The military offensive has given humanitarian agencies greater latitude in both Mogadishu and Gedo. Both the TFG and Shabaab have established committees to deal with the drought.

People from rural areas, both nomads who have lost their animals and settled residents, have migrated to the capital and other cities to get help. The poorest residents of cities and internally displaced persons are usually affected harder than people in rural areas, because in the countryside many people after all produce their own food. The drought that is plaguing South Somalia has however now also affected agricultural areas, and the UN has declared that there is famine in the Lower Shabelle, parts of Bakool, parts of Central Shabelle, the Afgoye corridor and among the internally displaced people in Mogadishu. In cities, people are referred to the food queue and alms if they do not have work, and clan affiliation often determines whether they get work. The TFG administration in Mogadishu is controlled by the Hawiye clan Abgal who are in majority in the city but the Hawiye clans Murusade and Haber Gedir are also represented, along with various other clans. Roots and ties to the clans that have a foothold in trade and other activities provide opportunities which many internally displaced persons do not have. The poorest have to downgrade schooling for children, and because water and electricity also costs money, they, like internally displaced persons, having to rely on education and other services run by charities.

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<sup>4</sup> The conflict is a power struggle for the presidency.

When asked about the living conditions of internally displaced people from Mogadishu, for example, seeking refuge in the traditional clan areas, a central international source explained to Landinfo in Nairobi in March 2009 that the resources in most communities were stretched to the threshold of pain. Clan members (the diya group) would, however, as far as possible share the scarce resources they had. But even here there are variations. In March 2011 some observers pointed out that people who for a long time had not maintained contact with relatives and local communities ran the risk of being left without support if they returned home.

Internally displaced people without a clan base in the area of residency lack the social safety net that clan affiliation in a local community represents and are thus in a difficult situation. This view was confirmed by both the Somali experts and international agency personnel in conversation with Landinfo, most recently in March 2011.

Food prices are high, purchasing power in the capital has fallen by approximately 34% in one year, and the price of grain and imported goods has risen considerably over the last six months (FSNAU 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Price increases follow in the wake of the periods of more intense conflict, and charges at roadblocks also contribute to higher prices (HRW 2011). Access to clean drinking water remains a significant problem and malnutrition levels, especially among internally displaced persons who have arrived in Mogadishu, are very high.

The fall of the Somali shilling in 2007 had dramatic consequences for the population's living conditions - the currency's value fell by more than 140% in less than one year. The currency now seems to have stabilised.<sup>5</sup>

Many Somalis are dependent on monthly remittances from relatives abroad to make ends meet (interviews in Nairobi, March 2009 and March 2011).

The international financial crisis took its toll here also, and in 2009 it is assumed that transfers fell by 25% (international source in Nairobi, e-mail 5 June 2009).

Daily life for most people is complex. Estimates show that 80% of the adult population have mobile phones. Electricity supply works in the cities (for those who can pay), and business is booming in some areas. 23% of the residents of Mogadishu are online daily. Radio stations broadcast locally on the FM band with, and in particular the TFG-hosted station Radio Mogadishu broadcasts 18 hours a day.

People listen to the radio, although Shabaab has threatened, closed or restricted the operation of many stations (NUSOJ 2011, Abdi 2010, VOA 2010 and interviews in Nairobi 18 March 2010).

When asked about any particular characteristics of the situation in Southern Somalia as compared to other conflict-affected areas or countries such as Afghanistan, a representative of an international organisation explained to Landinfo in March 2009 that Somalia is different from other conflict areas because the crisis has been going

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<sup>5</sup> However, there has been a slight rise, and the exchange rate against the dollar has been relatively stable since May 2010. Since October 2008, the shilling's value rose by 3% from 35,225 SoSh per dollar to 34,067 SoSh per dollar in December 2008. From December 2008 to February 2009 the value rose further to approximately 28000 SoSh per dollar, and as of May 2011 there was a fall to approximately 32000 (FSNAU 2011c). There are some regional variations, and the quoted price is from Mogadishu.



on for nearly two decades. The country has had no functioning central government in this period, and recurrent local conflicts have hindered reconstruction and development. The continuing difficult security situation limits the action of the international aid organisations. This source summarised the situation in Somalia as "unique, complex and enduring", and the UN appointed Special Rapporteur for Human Rights describes the international community's commitment to finding solutions in Somalia as first aid, in contrast to other conflict areas, where the commitment is far more extensive and sustained (UNHCR 2010, p. 26). The drought which has hit the Horn is making this situation worse.

The number of civilians who have been displaced because of conflict varies, especially the number of people living in the so-called Afgoye corridor. In total, according to the UN that are over 1.4 million internally displaced people throughout Somalia.

According to the UNHCR (2011a) in June 2011 there were approximately 423,000 Somali refugees in Kenya, approximately 350,000 of whom live in refugee camps in Dadaab (which is only designed for 90,000 people). The drought is displacing more and more people. Since January 2011 more than 70,000 have arrived in Kenya, and 1300 are now arriving daily in the Kenyan refugee camps in the north of the country, while 1700 a day cross the border into Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, as of June there were approximately 103,000 Somali refugees and in Yemen approximately 187,000. The unrest in Yemen in recent months has meant that some Somalis have returned to Somalia.

### **3. ABUSE AGAINST CIVILIANS AND REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

Despite the fact that the availability of information and monitoring of the human rights situation in Somalia has changed in a positive direction in recent years, the absence of international observers with primary responsibility for systematic monitoring of violations of human rights remains a problem. This has been emphasised, in particular, by the UN-appointed expert on human rights in Somalia (UNHCR, 2009, p. 11):

*Monitoring the human rights situation in south and central Somalia remains very difficult because of the serious constraints to gathering information owing to security conditions. The independent expert was himself unable to visit the region. Nevertheless, major human rights concerns have been documented and the independent expert remains deeply concerned at the deterioration of the situation.*

The local human rights organisations have not published detailed reports on the Internet in recent years for fear of safety. The organisation Elman, which is based in Mogadishu, for example, only publishes general reports and references to Somali

news bulletins on its website.<sup>6</sup> The TFG has also prevented human rights observers from carrying out their work (HRW 2011, p. 9).

Landinfo has repeatedly discussed issues related to local organisations' objectivity and information in general with various international and Somali experts in Nairobi, most recently in March 2011. They all point out that both human rights groups and other voluntary organisations largely reflect Somali society, in which clan loyalty is an important element. Negative attitudes and lack of understanding of minority groups and their situation - even in areas where they constitute a large part of the community - can contribute to the fact that abuse of these groups is the subject of scant attention from mainstream society and notice by foreign observers.

Another important factor is that information and news reporting is politicised.

Competition among many NGOs for funds from international donors is also a factor that could colour the situation descriptions. According to an international observer with a journalistic background reports to the outside world are often based on one point of view, and, in areas where Shabaab is in control, journalists may be afraid to report because Somalia is such a transparent society (interview in Nairobi, 18 March 2010, interviews in Nairobi in March 2011). The Somali association of journalists also points out that there are many areas in the south where the journalists do not dare to enter (NUSOJ 2011). It is also possible to question the extent of sources.

It is often unclear whether a single source is the source of the information presented, or whether there are in fact a variety of sources that communicate independently. It is therefore still difficult to get a complete, objective picture of what is happening in southern Somalia, particularly Shabaab-controlled areas.

When asked about the extent of abuses against the civilian population, all of Landinfo's interviewees in Nairobi most recently in March 2011 said that abuse and murder were still going on, but more sporadically than before. There are reports of fewer assassinations of political opponents and resource personnel, and fewer kidnappings compared with the previous year. The decline may be due to changes in tactics, but could also be a result of the fact that people have become more vigilant. However, none of the sources could specifically quantify the extent, but the vast majority of Somali and international resource personnel Landinfo has met in recent years think that events of major importance will generally be reported to the international community that follows developments in Somalia.

Civilians are killed and injured because they get in the crossfire between warring parties. Random detention and harassment of civilians in government controlled areas occurs, but the scope is far more limited than in 2007-2008. However, none of the members of the various police and security forces who arrested, harassed and abused civilians in 2007-2008 have been held accountable for their actions, and they are still in service (interview with Somali resource person in Nairobi, 26 March 2009).

Both international and Somali experts point out that crime has fallen in areas under Shabaab control. These groups have limited popular support, but strict punishment creates fear and serves as a deterrent.

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<sup>6</sup> The URL of Elman is <http://www.elmanpeace.org>.

Shabaab also operates an effective surveillance and intelligence system, and the consequences of espionage and collaboration with Shabaab's opponents can be fatal (interview with Somali resource person in Nairobi, 26 March 2009; interviews with Somali and international experts in Nairobi, March 2010 and March 2011; Garowe Online 2010).

The majority of the newly arrived Somali male refugees Landinfo talked with in the Dadaab camps in March 2010, stated that the main reason for leaving their home country was the fear of recruitment to Shabaab. Several also mentioned war weariness and the need for health care for accompanying family members or themselves. Among the women, the dress code imposed by Shabaab is an important reason. Almost all had relatives or neighbours who had been killed or wounded because of the conflict in recent years. The majority of those who have arrived in recent months are affected by the humanitarian crisis unfolding in particular in Lower Shabelle, and parts of Bay.

#### **4. EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated the following in August 2008 (OHCHR2008, p. 8):

*The TFIs [Transitional Federal Institutions], which suffer from a severe lack of capacity and also often from internal political tension, have so far failed to promote law and order. The administration of justice system is practically non-functional, and elders are presently de facto in charge of justice by applying traditional practices, including compensation, mostly for less serious offences, as they will have no influence on ensuring accountability for serious crimes. In this sense there is an absolute culture of impunity.*

This situation has changed little, and poor coordination, lack of trust and poor communication are creating problems.<sup>7</sup> Several government crises and new appointments have succeeded one another in recent years (Horseed Media 2010).

An analysis of the security sector in Somalia, which was conducted in 2009, shows major weaknesses at all levels within the entire justice and security sector, and the government has not succeeded in establishing and delivering basic services to the population.

The tax collection system is almost non-functional, government administration scarcely has a budget and most employees are not paid. Much of the infrastructure that is necessary for government institutions to function is either nonexistent or very rudimentary (UNPOS 2010).<sup>8</sup> Development assistance is administered mainly by donor organisations and social services provided by volunteer community

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<sup>7</sup> The TFG is composed of politicians, warlords, returning from the diaspora and representatives of civil society. In 2009 they formed a coalition with politicians, Islamists, the diaspora and representatives of civil society belonging to the ARS (Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia).

<sup>8</sup> In 2009 there were only 18 employees who were paid by the international community in each of the ministries (interview with the international organisation in Nairobi, 23 March 2009).

organisations supported financially by the Somali diaspora and by Muslim charities, for example by providing schooling and healthcare.

Work on the creation and development of a professional Somali army is slow (Hourelid 2011). Several observers and representatives of various international organisations whom Landinfo has met in Nairobi in recent years have pointed out that lack of coordination of the forces is contributing to a weak army. This is evident in the authorities' inability to retain and consolidate their position in the territories they have captured.

There are also a number of independent militia members loyal to the transitional government, but outside government control.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4.1 POLICE AND LAW AND ORDER**

The UN development programme UNDP is in particular involved in the so-called ROLS<sup>10</sup> programme, which has trained judges for the Supreme Court and contributed to the creation of several regional courts. Through this programme free legal assistance is also provided through local NGOs and legal aid clinics. These projects also collaborate with the traditional conflict resolvers in local communities.

In April 2011 UNDP started the first training programme for a number of years for judges, prosecutors and other judicial personnel in Mogadishu (UNDP Somalia u.å.).

Experience with previous efforts has been mixed. The judges are afraid and do not meet at work, and it is also difficult to monitor the proceedings and business of the courts. The project of legal assistance/legal aid has been successful in northern Somalia, and according to UNDP (interview in Nairobi, June 2008) there are certain positive developments in the south. The weaknesses in the legal sector are considerable.<sup>11</sup> An analysis of the security sector carried out in 2009 showed that Supreme Court judges were not being appointed and the office of Attorney General was vacant.<sup>12</sup> This situation remains unchanged. Law enforcement in Mogadishu is performed by police, militias and neighbourhood groups.<sup>13</sup> Traditional patrolling

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<sup>9</sup> After the agreement with Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a in June 2009 it is assumed that an additional approximately 3000 soldiers from this armed group are in Mogadishu in support of the TFG.

<sup>10</sup> The Rule of Law and Security Programme (ROLS) was established in 2002 in cooperation between various UN agencies, donor countries and the Somali authorities. The objectives of the programme are to rehabilitate and strengthen the judicial system, establish a professional police force, strengthen the understanding of human rights, support the authorities in their efforts to demobilise and disarm militias, raise the awareness of the population about the need to control small arms and reinforce the national mine clearance activities. The so-called Police Advisory Committees (PAC) play a positive role. These committees were established to ensure that the prison inmates of Benadir region were treated in accordance with international human rights standards. They report monthly on the situation, and during the period September 2007 to April 2008, 12 police stations, the central prison and CID detention centre in Mogadishu were regularly visited. In the period June-December 2007, 1800 of the 5,000 to 6,600 inmates in the sixteen police stations in Mogadishu were released. In April 2008 there were 1,378 inmates in the detention places. Of these, 162 were women and 65 minors. Many of the minors were in detention at the request of their parents.

<sup>11</sup> Eight district courts functioned as of November 2009 in the districts at the time controlled by the TFG, and around 24 judges, half of them are lawyers, handles civil cases and less serious criminal cases.

<sup>12</sup> The report (not published) is a collaborative project between the UN, US, Somali authorities, the AU and the EU. The UN Secretary-General also refers to it in an edition of its regular reporting to the Security Council, see UN Security Council 2010, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> These informal enforcement groups are business people, Sharia courts and others.

occurs only sporadically, and crime scene investigations and analysis of evidence in criminal cases are almost non-existent. Reporting and recording of reports take place on an ad hoc basis, and there are no standardised forms. Prosecution of non-terrorism related cases occurs very rarely. It also seems that prisoners are sometimes released in response to pressure and threats from the prisoner's clan.

The majority of the estimated 5,000 policemen are stationed in and around Mogadishu (the numbers vary, partly because some abscond), but as several of Landinfo interviewees in Nairobi in March 2010 said: "Everyone wants to train them, but nobody wants to pay them". Salaries unpaid for months weaken loyalty and dedication, and defecting to Shabaab has not been uncommon.

When asked if people report criminal offences, a number of international observers in Nairobi in March 2010 indicated that most people turn to their clan or the Sharia courts, not the police (interviews of 18 March 2010). Confidence in the police and military is not great - how can we rely on today's police who were yesterday's militia? Moreover, neither the police nor AMISOM could help people in need of protection for threats or attacks from, for example, Shabaab (interviews in Nairobi, March 2010).

## **5. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT**

Freedom of movement in southern Somalia has improved in recent years<sup>14</sup>, and the overall impression is that people can travel relatively freely, both in government controlled areas and in areas controlled by other groups, including al-Shabaab (interviews in Nairobi in March 2009, March 2010 and March 2011). This applies even though both Shabaab and TFG have reintroduced some checkpoints, mainly at the main entrances to cities in order to levy taxes and to monitor travellers (interviews in Nairobi, March 2011). For example, there are several roadblocks on the route from Mogadishu to Marka. According to one international observer Landinfo talked with in Nairobi in March 2011 some Shabaab checkpoints are manned by children as young as twelve years old.

In March 2010, several newly arrived Somali refugees in the Dadaab camps mentioned in conversations with Landinfo that they had not suffered injury at the many Shabaab-controlled checkpoints in Lower Juba. Several of Landinfo's interlocutors in March 2011 stated that there could be some risk in travelling to the south, but people travel in spite of this. The main challenges are related to the crossing of any front lines (both in and outside of Mogadishu), and not least entry into Shabaab areas where newcomers risk accusations of espionage. People who are most at risk in Shabaab-controlled areas are young men and, to some extent, young women. But given Shabaab's need for revenue, people are generally quite safe, as

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<sup>14</sup> Whereas in the period from February to March 2008 there were approximately 400 roadblocks in the southern and central Somalia, there were only two between Mogadishu and the Kenyan border in March 2009. The decrease in the number of roadblocks affected in particular transportation costs, which on the Mogadishu-Baidoa Road in the Bay region were reduced by 60% in a short time (interview in Nairobi 24 March 2009).

long as they can pay for themselves at checkpoints. Women usually travel with a male relative or in groups.

It is still relatively easy to get to Kenya and there is extensive smuggling through Kismayo to both Kenya and Ethiopia.

The removal of roadblocks has had a positive effect on crime, because it means an end to rape and robbery, which were previously common in these places. A well-informed Somali resource person pointed out to Landinfo in March 2009 that travellers are still investigate the conditions in advance, both along the route and at their destination, to avoid conflicts and to meet with groups they may have something to settle with.

According to Landinfo's assessment, this situation is unchanged.

## **6. WHERE DO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE ACCESS?**

International organisations have been targets of violent attacks since 2008, and today there are only a small number of international representatives in southern Somalia, both because of the security risk and because al-Shabaab has banned most international organisations (UN Security Council 2011; interviews in Nairobi, March 2011). Like the UN and foreign embassies, the activity is therefore run from headquarters in Nairobi, while local employees are responsible for the work in Southern Somalia.<sup>15</sup>

Aid work in Somalia is also risky for the local employees, however. In the period January to September 2008, 26 aid workers were killed. In 2009, eight were killed, and in 2010, three killed (UNHCR 2010, Alertnet 2010). The reason for the decline in the number of fatalities is probably complex. In Shabaab-controlled areas aid agencies have had limited access. The World Food Programme (WFP) decided in January 2010 to suspend its activities in Shabaab-controlled areas.<sup>16</sup> At the beginning of August 2010 Shabaab also ordered the international aid organisations ADRA, World Vision and Diakonia out, and claimed that they were doing missionary work (CNN 2010). With these three organisations out of Shabaab-areas, the number of international aid agencies in southern Somalia has been further reduced (MSF 2011). On 6 July 2011 a spokesman for Shabaab declared that both Muslim and non-Muslim organisations could gain complete access to their areas, because the humanitarian situation was extremely serious for most of the population (Ahmed

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<sup>15</sup> The UN moved its operations to Nairobi back in 1993/94. The local staff in Somalia serves as a liaison with local communities, and, to avoid conflicts and accusations of unfair treatment of certain clans, they have local employees of the same clan as the population in the project areas. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has decided that the UN must return to Somalia. Initially this will apply to Somaliland and Puntland, but in the longer term also to Mogadishu.

<sup>16</sup> The reason that the food fund withdrew from Southern Somalia was the eleven conditions which Shabaab imposed for continued WFP operations. The conditions were contrary to the adopted principles for humanitarian assistance. The terms included the dismissal of female employees who worked for the WFP, the prohibition of buying food from other than Somali producers and the prohibition of the use of the UN emblem.

2011). On 22 July, however, Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamoud Rage disavowed this information and stated that the international organisations that had previously been banned from operating in their areas were still unwanted. He also claimed that there was famine in the areas concerned, and that aid organisations were encouraging people to flee rather than stay at home to till the soil (Shabelle Media Network 2011d, 2011e).

## **7. THE SITUATION IN MOGADISHU**

Fighting between Shabaab and AMISOM/TFG in February and March 2011 was the worst in a long time, according to international observers and Somali experts (interviews in Nairobi in March 2011). Skirmishes between Shabaab and AMISOM/TFG continued through the spring and summer, and after heavy fighting in Hodan, Howlwadag, Wardhingley, Daynile and parts of northern Mogadishu, the Somali media reported on 6 August that Shabaab had withdrawn its forces from Mogadishu (Shabelle Media Network 2011f).

According to AMISOM, Shabaab has withdrawn from 90-95% of the city, but there are still some clashes in the north of the city (OCHA 2011a, 2011b, Shabelle Media Network 2011i). It remains to be seen what impact the withdrawal will have on the security situation in the city. Shabaab has stated that it will go on the counter-attack, and on 12 August Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamoud Rage told the Shabelle Media Network that the movement still had troops in Mogadishu, and that they will continue the fight against the transitional government and AMISOM (Shabelle Media Network 2011g).

AMISOM has had a clear pro-active role in the battle for Mogadishu. The force has been proactive, not least with foot soldiers (and heavy artillery), and losses in particular the Burundian contingent have been great. On the other side, the losses have also apparently been high, probably several hundred.

During the last six months, tens of thousands have sought refuge in the capital because of the humanitarian crisis and the drought that has hit parts of Southern Somalia. From January to mid-August 2011 more than 60,000 people migrated to Mogadishu. (UNHCR 2011b).

### **7.1 CIVILIAN LOSSES AND SAFETY IN MOGADISHU**

According to a well-informed international aid worker on average ten people died each week in fighting in Mogadishu in 2010 (interview in Nairobi 16 March 2010).

The offensive against al-Shabaab, which started in February 2011, cost at times even more civilian lives in Mogadishu. The UN reports that 62 civilians were killed and 232 wounded during the first week of the offensive in the capital (UN Security Council 2011). According to the WHO (2011a) hospitals in Mogadishu have treated more than 5200 patients with weapon-related injuries so far this year. In May alone,

1,590 patients with weapon-related injuries were treated at the city's three largest hospitals. Almost half of the 1,590 injured were children under five.<sup>17</sup>

One of the reasons for the number of dead being low at times was because the fighting took place in areas of the city where civilians are no longer living. The heavy fighting in the spring of 2011, however, was around Bakara market, not only Mogadishu's largest market, but also an important residential area (WHO 2011b). Civilians were hit by the fighting there and in other combat zones, both because they came in the crossfire between the sides and because AMISOM responded with somewhat arbitrary and imprecise attacks on suspected al-Shabaab targets.

Aside from the fighting, the safety of civilians in Mogadishu, according to observers, was better in Shabaab-controlled areas than in areas where the TFG was in control. Several of Landinfo's interviewees in Nairobi in March 2011 pointed out, however, that control can be a misleading term, and that spheres of influence would be a better expression. The higher crime in the TFG areas than in Shabaab areas is partly due to undisciplined soldiers who commit robberies, rapes of women of all ages and from all clans, and extortion.<sup>18</sup> However, it is difficult to say anything about the extent of such abuses, and whether they are systematic. Several of Landinfo's interviewees claimed that this was the case, while others questioned the source material. In Landinfo's assessment abuse undoubtedly occurs, but it's hard to be sure that it is very comprehensive and systematic.

Much of the Hawiye Haber Gedir population, which previously had influence in Mogadishu, left the city in 2007-2008 and now lives mainly in the Afgoye-corridor.

Security varied as mentioned in the various districts. In Shabaab-controlled parts of the city there was a relatively high degree of law and order, but the activities of human rights organisations and international relief organisations were closely monitored there, and there was not a complete overview of the conditions for the population. In 2009/2010 a British polling institute carried out a survey among 1000 residents in 15 of the 16 districts in Mogadishu (Langer 2010).<sup>19</sup> The majority of respondents said that food insecurity and lack of work were the biggest challenge, followed by conflict and lack of security.

The people are war weary, but support for the TFG was relatively high. At the same time, the internal conflicts between the government and parliament, and especially the president, parliamentary leader and prime minister, have weakened confidence in the government and politicians.

The poll also showed that support for the opposition (al-Shabaab and other groups) was low. Various observers have also pointed out that economic conditions are a

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<sup>17</sup> The two hospitals Medina and Keyseney which are in TFG areas are operating with the support of the International Red Cross. Medina has officially 85 beds, but in emergency situations, this hospital can cater for 200-300 patients.

During 2010, 6,000 patients were admitted at the two hospitals.

<sup>18</sup> It has also been claimed that women from minority groups were more vulnerable to such abuse than women from ordinary clans, but those most exposed were internally displaced persons, regardless of clan or group affiliation.

<sup>19</sup> The survey was carried out on behalf of an unnamed organisation. Several of Landinfo's interviewees in Nairobi in March 2010 referred to the poll.



driving force in the conflict, and the influential private sector players in Mogadishu are not necessarily well served by state control and control (Childress 2010, Warsameh 2010).

Electricity is available in most neighbourhoods, for those who can pay. The poorest, including the internally displaced, do not enjoy the benefits of this provision. Water must be purchased. The price is 10,000 to 15,000 Somali shillings (about three kroner) for a 20-30 litre water jug (Warsameh 2010). Clan-based groups offer these services and assist their own clans. Schools are open, but Shabaab restricts the curriculum in some of the areas they control.

For years the Bakara market in town of Hawl Wadaag has been the centre of economic activity in Mogadishu, and in recent years an important source of income and trade for Shabaab. The area has been the scene of heavy fighting (Shabelle Media Network 2011a). But it is also a large residential area, and the fighting therefore affected both those who live there, those who have lost their jobs in the area and the families they support. The authorities are working to reopen the market (Shabelle Media Network 2011h).

The quarters of Medina, Dharkenley, Hamar Weyne, Waaberi and Hamar Jabjab have been affected by conflict to a much lesser extent, but are overcrowded, because people from other troubled districts have sought refuge there (interviews in Nairobi, March 2010). In Medina the Abgal militia has a foothold and control, and the security situation is relatively good (interviews in Nairobi, March 2011).

In March 2010, a number of observers claimed that the situation was more difficult than in the early 1990s - for both the population and those who will assist the population (interviews in Nairobi, March 2010). When the first phase of the civil war was over and the UN forces intervened in 1993, the international organisations were able to perform their tasks. The unpredictability was less, although the former warlords caused suffering among civilians. Over twenty years of conflict and the absence of organised development and reconstruction, however, have made a deep impression on all areas of society. Poverty in Mogadishu is now more widespread than in the early 1990's, it is therefore difficult to help others in need, and those who do not have relatives outside the country are being hit hardest. The bedrock of the Somali community, the clan system, is also impaired. At the same time all Somalia-experts point out that the clan system is still the safety net for Somalis at home and abroad, and in spite of great challenges the population is showing considerable ability to adapt to changing and difficult circumstances (interviews in Nairobi, March 2010). (See also Landinfo 2011.)

## **8. SITUATION IN SOUTHERN SOMALIA OUTSIDE MOGADISHU**

The conflicts and clashes between government and rebels in Southern Somalia is not as intense and extensive in all areas, but is mainly localised in certain key areas and cities. Mogadishu has been the key issue for many years, and other strategically important cities such as Kismayo in Lower Juba, Beled Weyne in Hiraan and various cities in Galgadud have changed control repeatedly in recent years.

The rebels do not have sufficient forces to act as an ordinary occupying army, but take control of the hub and form alliances with local clans and their elder councils.

Clan disputes over water and grazing are not uncommon, but are usually resolved by negotiations between the parties. According to an international observer with long experience in this part of Somalia, the security situation in 80% of central Somalia, i.e. large parts of Mudug and Galgaduud, is relatively good and in line with the security situation in Puntland. The remaining 20% are pockets or sanctuaries for al-Shabaab and other groups, including pirates. The areas between Adaado and Haradere, and parts of the coastal strip in the regional state Himaan & Heeb (in the Somali orthography Ximaan & Xeeb), are generally the most unstable area in this region.

According to the international observers, the clan system is working well in central Somalia (interview in Nairobi 31 March 2011 e-mail 3 April 2011). Conflicts over water and grazing land can be managed through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and the clan elders are usually able to prevent escalation of clan conflicts. Conflicts between local clans, however, give the radical groups the opportunity to exert influence.

Some of the clans and minorities are particularly susceptible to this influence, because they receive power and/or status they previously lacked through cooperation with Shabaab. This radicalisation is, according to the observer, not ideologically driven, but driven by the desire for power.

The main challenge for the majority of the inhabitants of Southern Somalia today is seemingly humanitarian. The drought currently ravaging the Horn of Africa is the worst in more than fifty years. The difficult humanitarian conditions, however, also originate in the underlying security issues. Lack of reconstruction and development means that health services are very limited, especially for people in rural areas, and it is estimated that there is one doctor per 25,000 inhabitants.<sup>20</sup> Over half of those working as health professionals lack education. 15% of children under five in South and Central Somalia are malnourished, compared with 10% in Somaliland, and 14% in Puntland. Similarly high figures are also found among the poor in towns and among internally displaced persons (FSNAU 2010).

## **8.1 GALGADUUD AND MUDUG**

The provinces of Galgaduud and Mudug are divided between various administrations, clans and militias. The northern part of Mudug is part of Puntland, while parts of South Mudug and parts of North Galgaduud belong to the (self-declared) regional state of Galmudug, which is situated in the Southern city of Galkayo. The Darood clan Majerteen is numerically and politically dominant in Puntland. The Hawiye clans Haber Gedir Saad, Suleiman and Ayr are central to South Mudug and parts of North Galgaduud, and somewhat further south the Hawiye clans Duduble and Murusade. Other parts of Galgaduud are included in the regional

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<sup>20</sup> According to WHO statistics, there were 300 doctors throughout Somalia in 2006, i.e. 0.035 per 1000 capita (WHO u.å.). By comparison, there were 1806 doctors in Ethiopia in 2007, i.e. 0.02 per 1000 population, in other words a medical coverage that is actually far worse than in Somalia, and 4,506 doctors in Kenya, which is far better (0.14 per 1000 inhabitants in 2002). The major hospitals in Somalia, in Mogadishu, but also in some parts of Southern Somalia, have very limited or no coverage by doctors (WHO 2006).

state Himaan & Heeb. The coastal area in Hobyo district is contested, and both the Galmudug and Himaan & Heeb administrations claim the area. De facto the coastal strip is controlled by pirates, especially pirates with close ties to local authorities.

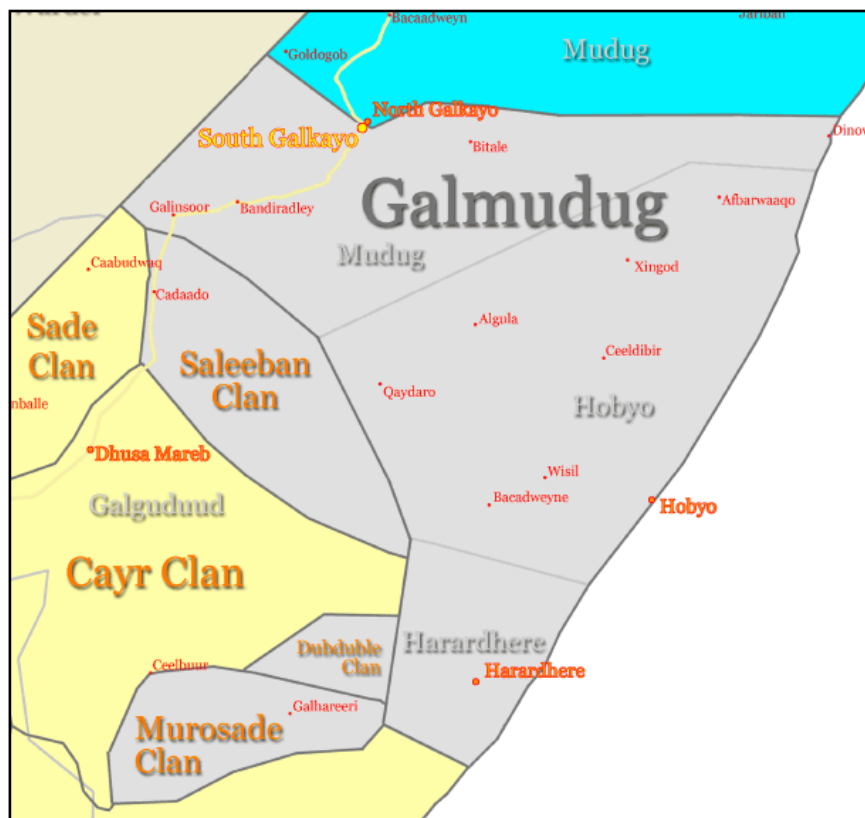
The city Hobyo in Mudug is controlled by clan-based groups. In the old part of the city Haber Gedir Saad predominates with a sense of belonging to the Galmudug administration, and in the newer part of the city is run by Haber Gedir Suleiman, who is loyal to the Himaan & Heeb administration.

The moderate Sunni Muslim movement Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a control other parts of Galgaduud after heavy fighting with al-Shabaab in January 2009. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a supports the transitional government. Shabaab controls the Southern part of Galgaduud. See also Section 8.1.1 and 8.1.2.

In April 2011 the number of internally displaced persons throughout the Galgaduud region is estimated at 149,000 (UNHCR 2011c). In Mudug, the figure was 84,000.

### 8.1.1 The Regional State of Galmudug

The Regional State of Galmudug was created in 2006 and consists, as its name indicates, of parts of the provinces of Mudug and Galgaduud. The capital is the southern part of the city of Galkayo.



Galmudug (Map taken from Wikipedia 2011).

The Hawiye clan Saad is numerically dominant and the Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is strong in this area. The situation in Galmudug/Mudug<sup>21</sup> is complex, but the security situation in large parts of the region is, as mentioned in the introduction, relatively good and in line with the security situation in Puntland

### **8.1.2 Himaan & Heeb**

Himaan & Heeb regional state has its headquarters in the city of Adaado, and was established by Mohamed Abdullahi Aden "Tiiceey", who belongs to Reer Haji Suleiman, a Hawiye Haber Gedir Suleiman (Saleban) sub-clan, in 2008 (Bauer 2011). See also map p. 23.

## **8.2 HIRAAN**

The strategically important Hiraan region is controlled by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's supporters in the Hawadle clan, while Galjeel and other local clans support al-Shabaab. The provincial capital Beled Weyne, which was captured by the Hizb ul-Islam in January 2010, has been controlled by Shabab since December 2011.

The region is home to approximately 51,000 internally displaced people from Mogadishu (UNHCR 2011c).

## **8.3 BAY AND BAKOOL**

Bay and Bakool are controlled by al-Shabaab. The province capital of Baidoa in Bay was captured by al-Shabaab on 26 January 2009, and has been under the movement's control ever since. In July 2011 the number of internally displaced persons was estimated at approximately 10,700 in Bay and 1,200 in Bakool (OCHA 2011b).

Bakool has been hard hit by the drought and the humanitarian situation is very difficult for the population in several districts. In July, the UN declared a famine in this province, and 142,000 of the estimated 360,000 people have been affected (OCHA 2011b)

In the neighbouring province Bay with more than 700,000 inhabitants, famine is also feared in the near future (OCHA 2011b).

## **8.4 MIDDLE SHABELLE**

This province is controlled by al-Shabaab and the humanitarian situation, according to the UN, is very difficult. On 3 August 2011 famine was declared in rural Balaad and Adaale. It is estimated that more than half of the province's approximately 500,000 inhabitants are in crisis and in need of food aid (OCHA 2011d).

## **8.5 LOWER SHABELLE INCLUDING THE ANGOVE CORRIDOR**

The balance of power in the Lower Shabelle has shifted over the last couple of years. The Hawiye clan Haber Gedir still has a certain influence because many large agricultural estates are still in Haber Gedir hands, but al-Shabaab has the military control of the region. The popular support for al-Shabaab is not great here, but it is claimed that many minority group members and members of local clans support the

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<sup>21</sup> See Wikipedia 2011 for a description of the history and geography.

movement. Marginalisation and the injustice of various Haber Gedir warlords and war profiteers to which many are exposed have provided fertile ground for al-Shabaab sympathies. Now they have a voice and opportunity to power (interviews in Nairobi, March 2009 and March 2010). The position may prove to be fatal, if the roles are swapped again.<sup>22</sup>

The security situation is generally relatively stable, but the international representatives of aid organisations do not have access to the so-called Afgoye corridor, where an estimated 400,000 internally displaced people from Mogadishu are living in 122 settlements (OCHA 2011c, UNHCR 2011c). Approximately 90,000 internally displaced persons are located in other parts of the province.

There is a relatively large amount of relief work in the camps. (Settlements would be perhaps a more appropriate term than camps, since such areas are little different from other permanent settlements or villages.) There are camp committees, consisting of persons selected by and from among the internally displaced. The cooperation between the NGOs working there and the committees is working well. Camp committees also prevent the activities of so-called gatekeepers. They operate extortion, and demand payment from both those living in camps and from aid agencies so that they can maintain their activities in the camps. In August 2010 the UN reported that several thousand internally displaced persons from dozens of settlements in the corridor had been forced to move because the landowners had obtained better-paying tenants (IASC Somalia 2010). Many will have travelled to Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle and the Wadajir district of Mogadishu.

The humanitarian situation in Lower Shabelle has gradually worsened during the last six months, and on 19 July 2011 the United Nations declared famine throughout the province. It is estimated that nearly 50% of the province's approximately one million inhabitants suffer from extreme food shortages.

According to FSNAU (2011d) between four and thirteen children of 10,000 die every day in Lower Shabelle.

## **8.6 GEDO AND JUBA-REGIONS**

The military offensive under the auspices of the TFG and its supporters has led to four of the six districts of Gedo coming under the TFG's own control, but Garbaharey and Bardere remain Shabaab-controlled.

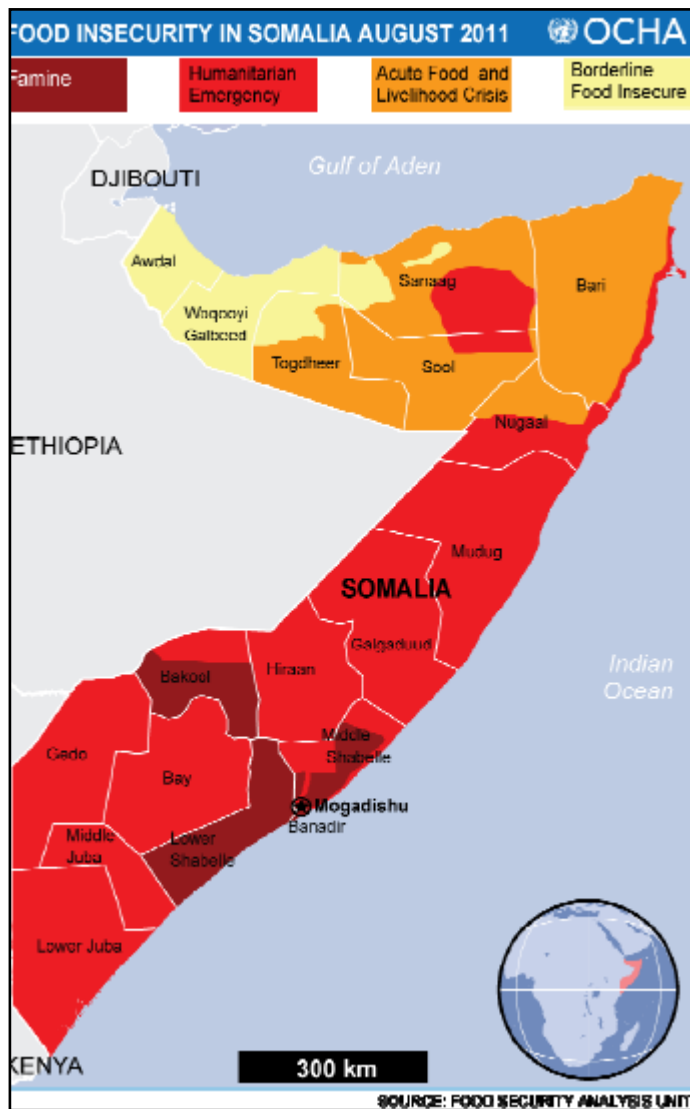
In April 2011, according to UNHCR (2011c), there were approximately 66,000 internally displaced persons in the Gedo region, 1000 in Central Juba and 26,000 in Lower Juba.

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<sup>22</sup> Some Somali experts Landinfo met in Nairobi in March 2009 and March 2010 also claimed that local residents who lost their farms during the Civil War have regained their property. One correspondent in March 2010 claimed that the properties in Lower Shabelle and Juba, which were confiscated in the aftermath of the Civil War, have been returned to their rightful owners on a large scale. No one could confirm these claims, but several pointed out that the vast majority would hardly dare to take up this question for fear of reprisals, and as a source put it: "Who will dare to demand their property back today, when nobody knows who will be in power tomorrow?"

An estimated 125,000 of the province's approximately 380,000 inhabitants are in need of food aid, but several aid organisations have access and aid is therefore getting through (OCHA2011e).

## 9. MAPS





Control Zones in Somalia, July 2011 (BFM 2011).

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