

UNDERSTANDING SOMALIA'S INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND THE ROLES OF INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on evaluating the Somalia's internal conflicts and the roles of international actors. The most significant issue in the Somalia's political situation is the breakdown of the state, which manifests in every aspect of Somali existence. A complex interaction of local, regional, and worldwide forces characterizes Somalia as a failed state, plagued by a crisis that has persisted for decades and encompasses numerous dimensions. In Somalia, Military Jihadist, tribal conflicts, external desires, regional and international interventions, along with stagnation and despotism, combine to create a fractured and deteriorating state that falls short of international standards in areas such as health, education, transparency, integrity, and effective governance. This article delves deeply into the position of the tribe in Somalia, analyzing the impact of Islamic organizations on the internal conflicts that emerged following the collapse of the central government in 1991. The article then scrutinizes Somalia's circumstances throughout this period, highlighting the challenges the current administration faces on domestic, regional, and international fronts as it works to reestablish the Somali state. Somalia poses a significant and detrimental challenge to the Horn of Africa region, experiencing prolonged battles and wars due to internal conflicts, border disputes, and its strategic location. These events have left Somalia in a prolonged state of instability, finally resulting in its fragmentation into a failed state.

Keywords: Somalia, Civil War, Africa, Failed State, Foreign Interventions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1960, known as the Year of Africa, Somalia, one of the seventeen countries on the African continent south of the Sahara, achieved independence from the European colonialism, paving the way for numerous other African countries to follow suit. Somalia is located at the intersection of the continents of Asia and Africa, serving as a boundary between the African, Arab, and Islamic countries. It also serves as a source of tension between the Islamic and Christian faiths in the area, giving it a unique geopolitical significance in the strategic considerations of global and regional powers, as well as a platform for fresh and varied international conflicts.

Africa has had several stable political entities and systems, some of which collapsed due to colonial invasion, while others survived by adapting to new conditions. However, these traditional systems are fundamental to African civilization, significantly clarifying the current state of affairs in Africa. Several challenges prevent any substantial effort to comprehend the intellectual underpinnings that established the framework for the formation of the Somalian state. Following the end of the colonization period, Somali leaders confronted the simple difficulty of securing political legitimacy. This included creating a governance framework for cultures characterized by cultural division, social diversity, and disparate levels of economic and political progress resulting from different colonial administration regimes. In the absence of a foundation for national unity, also Somali leaders encountered social and political challenges, including the demand for a federal governance structure. Some factions even advocated for independence from the newly established Somali state, alongside movements urging the realization of the right to self-determination for peoples and nationalities fragmented by arbitrary colonial borders in Africa¹.

The internal conflict in Africa has resulted in a variety of outcomes, such as the collapse and destruction of states, the rise of political violence or a culture of violence within African societies, the emergence of refugee crises, the recruitment of children into armed conflicts, and other phenomena that contribute to the intensification and recurrence of conflicts. Since the end of World War II, the African continent has experienced waves of wars and civil crises. Somalia witnessed a protracted civil war characterized by tribal conflict and violence, lasting for around 25 years, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Somalis and the devastation of the nation's infrastructure. The instability affected progress, development, and education in Somalia. The existing conditions of Somalia, characterized by disintegration, its evolution into a battleground for civil conflict, and the rise of separatist regions and factions, sharply contrasts with the distinctive attributes of the Somali context. Included are the Somali people's dedication to national unification and cultural uniformity, their adherence to Islam, their linguistic unity, their collective past, and their association with the Greater Somalia slogan, which seeks to reclaim the lost Somali territories. However, the strength of clan and tribe allegiance led to significant tribal fragmentation within this culture. The Somali conflict is particularly known for its unique traits that differentiate it from the majority of earlier internal conflicts in Africa, resulting in the total destruction of the state. A primary consequence of conflict is state collapse, characterized by the weakening of state structures and restricting their ability to fulfill different responsibilities. The lasting impact of the ongoing civil war resided in the use of several conflict resolution mechanisms, including talks, mediation, and foreign involvement. This highlights the civil war as a significant event in Africa, stemming from global competition for control over the region. Furthermore, it provided a clear understanding of the Somali conflict, encompassing its origins, timeline, divisions, foreign involvement, national reconciliation initiatives, and the establishment of a transitional government. Internal conflicts are a prominent phenomenon in Africa, with virtually no region on the continent devoid of a violent conflict or civil war. These conflicts have had profound effects not only on political life, but also on all levels of the continent. The phenomenon of internal conflicts in the African continent is characterized as a complex phenomenon, whether in terms of its backgrounds and causes or

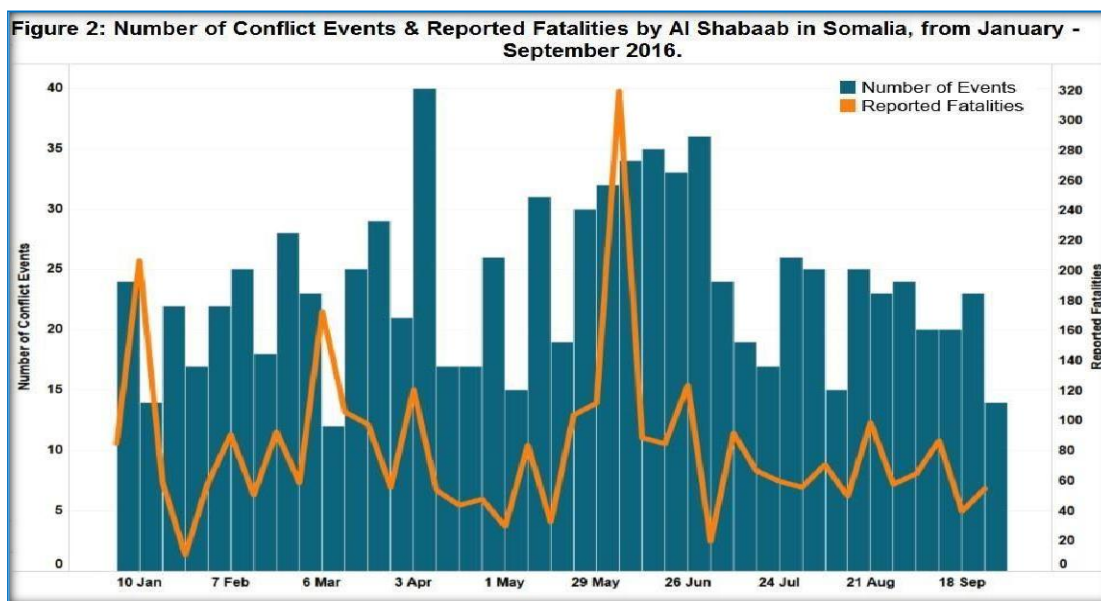
¹ Somalia: legitimacy of the Provisional Constitution | Conciliation Resources. (n.d.). <https://www.c-r.org/accord/legitimacyand-peace-processes/constitutional-review-%C2%A0peace-processes-securing-local-0..>

in terms of its results and repercussions. In terms of causes, a variety of factors contributed to the emergence of internal conflicts.

Several Islamic groups attempting to impose their understandings of Islam on Somalia have similarly influenced the situation. Some of these organizations may have split up due to their divergent perspectives. The Somali Al-Shabab organization is arguably the most significant of these movements, having had a considerable influence on Somali political affairs through its rapid expansion and dominance over extensive regions of Somalia, particularly in the central and southern areas, alongside its involvement in numerous confrontations with government military forces. The popularity of the organization highlighted its roots, aims, and military activities in Somalia and its rapid spread across many locations.

2.0 INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND THEIR HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

Since gaining its independence in 1960, Somalia has experienced political instability, leading to political conflicts that have escalated into internal violence. Persistent factors such as tribal, sectarian, regional, religious, and social structures have exacerbated these conflicts. These internal factors have significantly contributed to unrest and instability. Following the Somalia's independence, local politicians embraced political pluralism as a viable democratic strategy for the transition of political power post-colonialism. However, a coup against political plurality occurred three years after the establishment of the independent state².



The Al-Shabab organization, which has been implicated in every violent act since 2016, continues to dominate Somalia's internal conflict. In comparison, state forces engage in two-thirds of the activities associated with the Al-Shabab. The Al-Shabab organization has considerably fortified its position in recent years, seizing control of new territories in southern Somalia and other places, as it seeks to expand its influence and incorporate various local

² Wikipedia contributors. (2024, February 21). Attempts at reconciliation in Somalia (1991–2004). Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attempts_at_reconciliation_in_Somalia_\(1991%E2%80%932004\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attempts_at_reconciliation_in_Somalia_(1991%E2%80%932004)).

affiliates and their respective initiatives. Conversely, state forces are not permanently stationed in many regions and have experienced a decline in power over the past years, evidenced by the increase in direct assaults by non-state actors on governmental entities and officials of international organizations³.

The Somali population characterized by a tribal structure, where the clan serves as an individual's shelter from the challenges encountered in public life. Before the arrival of colonists, tribes in some regions of Somali geography established kingdoms and states, along with entities resembling states. These groupings included an organizational structure under the leadership of a tribal sheikh, a security apparatus, and the implementation of customary rules governing the tribe's economic and social aspects and throughout the period of colonization and following its leaving, the colonizer encouraged chaos and conflicts among tribes by creating divisions and supporting groups and parties based on tribal ties. The colonial powers encouraged chaos and conflicts among tribes by forming separate political parties for each clan, which led to an increase in political parties across the country. This significantly influenced cultural consciousness of the methods of forming modern groups, with the tribe serving as the cornerstone of all political, social, and economic endeavors⁴.

In late 1969, amid a period of instability in Somalia following the death of a president Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke with many groups associated, the military, led by Siyad Barre, executed a coup against the civilian administration. The administration he formed aimed to eradicate the roots of tribalism in the nation and implemented hostile policies against any expressions of tribalism. These misguided policies exacerbated tribal conflicts by failing to consider the societal structure and its historically tribal character. Investing in tribal variety might foster an atmosphere conducive to the growth of the state idea and cultivate patriotism among societal members. Emphasizing the tribe's positive attributes, like fostering social cohesion in its various forms, could achieve this instead of trying to eradicate it. Nevertheless, this did not occur⁵.

Somalia experienced a multiparty democratic system from the start of its political administration after independence. Prof. Abdi Ismail Samatar, in his book *The First African Democracy*, asserts that Somalia was the first African nation to have a peaceful transition of power, since it maintained civilian democratic governance from 1960 to 1969. Samatar demonstrates this by noting that the administration of Somalia's inaugural president, Mr. Adam Abdullah Osman, and his prime minister, Abdul Razak Haji Hussein (1964-1967), was characterized by a profound respect for the constitution and adherence to the separation of powers and responsibilities. These two people exemplify the first African democracy that offers guidance for politicians throughout the continent, and the civilian democratic system existed until 1969, when a military coup organized by Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre happened (Samatar, 2016).

³ Kishi, R. (2020, February 23). Somalia – October 2016 update. ACLED. <https://acleddata.com/2016/10/07/somalia-october-2016-update>.

⁴ The role of clans in Somalia. (n.d.). European Union Agency for Asylum. <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-somalia2023/role-clans-somalia>.

⁵ F-pifadmin. (2013, May 8). Somalia - FPIF. Foreign Policy in Focus. <https://fpif.org/somalia>.

General Mohamed Siyad Barre organized a military coup that governed Somalia for 21 years (1991-1999), promptly ignoring the constitution and eliminating elected institutions while arresting many political leaders. The military legitimized their conquest of authority by addressing corruption and tribal conflict, a strategy common to several military coups throughout Africa. Nonetheless, Siyad Barre built a totalitarian system that eventually fell victim to the same problem of corruption, favoritism, and tribalism that the military used to justify the termination of civilian governance. The dismantling of the democratic system, the restriction of liberties, and the imposition of authoritarianism marked a regression in Somalia's political framework (Ingiriis, 2016).

The implementation of the federal system in Somalia was in 2000; a Somali reconciliation conference took place in the town of Arta, Djibouti, under the guidance of President Ismail Omar Guelleh, a decade after the collapse of the central government in 1991 and after around 15 failed peace attempts. The meeting led to the establishment of a provisional transitional administration, the election of a president and parliament for Somalia, and the establishment of the Transitional Somali Government (TNG), the country's first transitional government. Since that day, Somalia has resumed its participation in international forums, and the Somali government created tribal quotas, assigning half of a major tribe's allocation to each of four big and tiny tribes—a system that persists in Somalia as of 2020. In spite of the consensus on the necessity of augmenting the powers allocated to the provinces and administrative regions, the Siyad Barre regime (1969–1991) instituted the administrative division of Somalia, comprising eighteen administrative provinces, and incorporated it into the Arta Charter in Djibouti⁶.

According to Virginia Luling, the failure to recognize the fundamental goals of the modern state, the inability to establish a cohesive identity for Somali society by integrating clans and tribes, and the neglect of state institutional development led to the state's collapse in 1999. The genocides under the military regime significantly influenced the state's collapse, with their effects evident in the ongoing civil war. The military defeat in the Ethiopian war had immediate consequences, resulting in a higher death toll at the onset of the conflict. The conflict intensified, leading to extensive destruction of the nation's infrastructure and increasing waves of displacement, migration, and asylum-seeking to both neighboring and distant countries. The battles significantly contributed to the realignment of tribes within Somali territory, which in turn created a complex political, social, and economic landscape in Somalia (LULING, 1997).

Following the outbreak of the civil war in 1991, civil society organizations returned themselves in order to fill the vacuum created by the government's collapse, primarily collaborating with international and regional non-governmental organizations to assist thousands of migrants. These groups also participated in rebuilding efforts and provided services such as education, healthcare, and water supplies when the impact of the conflict decreased. Non-governmental organizations were instrumental throughout the civil war of the 1990s, primarily focusing on humanitarian assistance and relief efforts and subsequently contributing to the management of public service matters within the state. However, due to its marginalization and limited involvement, Somali civil society did not significantly contribute to the state-building processes (Thania Paffenholz, Christoph Spurk, 2006).

⁶ AMISOM - African Union Mission in Somalia. (n.d.). Somali Peace Process - AMISOM. AMISOM. <https://amisomau.org/about-somalia/somali-peace-process>.

The implementation of the tribal quota policy and other measures that obstruct the building process have hampered Somalia's efforts to build a state. This is because building a state depends on having development policies that treat everyone equally and do not leave any group out. The internal conflicts in Somalia resulted in the formation of a group of governing bodies that interacted with one another according to their geographical closeness. The country's implementation of the federal system gave these divisions official legitimacy, ignoring the underlying reasons for their establishment. However, the lack of rationality and misalignment with the societal framework rendered the federal option inappropriate for Somali culture. This is due to the society's reliance on a clan and tribal structure, which is incompatible with the rationale of many ethnicities and nations, unlike many other countries globally. Moreover, the geographical spread of these tribes and clans precludes the identification of particular economic regions for each tribe⁷.

3.0 THE ROLES AND IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

When Somalia emerged as an independent state on the global scene during the peak of the Cold War, it faced political and economic difficulties that made it particularly vulnerable to the machinations of strong power competition. Upon its formation, Somalia faced significant fiscal challenges and required significant assistance to maintain its overall financial stability. Italian, Ethiopian, French, and British colonial divisions further split the Somali country into four parts. The two sections, British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland, achieved independence and established the Somali Republic, while the other territories either denied the Somalis their rights, as seen in the Somali region of Ethiopia, or neglected them, as seen in the British colony of Kenya. The influence of international actors in East Africa is significant, and there has been competition among the industrial countries. The East African region, positioned as a crucial intersection between Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean extending to Pakistan, has witnessed heightened security operations for over a decade and has emerged as a competitive battleground. The substantial foreign trade volume between Japan, China, and India with the European Union, their continuous development and expansion, and their resource needs from Africa, particularly oil, highlight the geopolitical significance of the Horn of Africa. The ongoing changes in the Horn of Africa, reflecting the region's situation, have piqued the interest of major nations, developing economies, and regional states. The European Union has established a plan known as the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa. Additionally, the strategic position of the Horn and the Union's historical connections with the Horn of Africa shape the European Union's objectives, as outlined in the policy.

Following the US departure from Somalia in 1993, fighting persisted, with warlords, supported by Ethiopia, controlling the conditions. The United Nations peacekeeping troops left Somalia in 1995 after their intervention to provide a secure environment for humanitarian assistance. Many tribal leaders convened in Djibouti in April and May 2000 for a national peace conference, with the aim of achieving peace and stability in Somalia. The warlords, under the leadership of Hussein, son of the late warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, who died from his injuries, withdrew from the meeting.

⁷ Mohamed, A. A. (2021). Challenges of federalism system and governance in Somalia. In SKA301 [Thesis]. <https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1660386/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

The conference decided to establish a transitional government following the consensus on a transitional national charter. The international world supported the transitional administration and recognized it as the legitimate government of Somalia. The Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council, consisting of groups under Hussein Aideed's leadership, opposed the government. The transitional administration suffered instability, resource limitation, and an insufficient ability to show power over the whole country⁸.

Table: it shows the impacts and roles for the some international actors in Somalia conflicts

Actor	Role	Impact	Key Conflict Involvement
UN	Peacekeeping, state-building	Mixed: Helped draft constitutions but failed to curb corruption	Civil war, Al-Shabaab insurgency
AU (AMISOM)	Military stabilization	Reduced Al-Shabaab control but caused civilian casualties	War against Al-Shabaab (2007–)
USA	Counterterrorism (drone strikes)	Degraded militants but fueled anti-Western resentment	Anti-terror ops (1993–present)
EU	Funding AMISOM, governance	Stabilized cities but aid dependency persists	State-building (2012–)
Turkey	Humanitarian aid, infrastructure	Built hospitals/roads; accused of political favoritism	Post-2011 famine recovery
UAE/Qatar	Economic deals, clan support	Funded development but exacerbated proxy conflicts	Federal vs. regional state disputes
Ethiopia	Military interventions	Temporary stability but long-term Somali resentment	2006 invasion, border disputes

Sources: crisis group, 2022

According to Peter Woodward, American policymakers have closely monitored the situation in East Africa since the late 1950s. Before the start of the Cold War, the United States government actively worked to establish its influence in the Horn of Africa, which includes East Africa. American foreign policymakers needed to act now to achieve their goals and protect their interests in this vital strategic region. Unfortunately, the United States could not put its plans into action until after the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. This was because the Soviet Union served as the primary adversary across the entirety of Africa. Regional agents, particularly in the East African region extending from Sudan and Ethiopia to Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, and Djibouti, facilitated the conflicts and competition between the two superpowers instead of engaging in direct confrontation (Woodward, US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa, 2006).

Despite Somalia's potential for unity due to its ethnic, linguistic, and religious homogeneity, regional and global administrations have contributed to division and fragmentation into weak

⁸ Sudan Tribune, & Sudan Tribune. (2007, February 14). Somalia: Warlords, Ethiopian Invasion, Dictatorship and US's Role. Sudan Tribune. <https://sudantribune.com/article20646>.

and fragile groups, with the goal of dividing the country into federal states that are independent of the federal government. The current tribal formula in Somalia concentrates power in the hands of the tribe's political authority, which in turn accumulates the state's influence, wealth, and money, thereby impeding efforts to establish a modern Somali state. Additionally, tribal and political quotas dictate administrative divisions, further impeding progress toward concrete political achievements in reality (Abdinor Dahir & Ali Yassin Sheikh Ali, 2021).

The United States' position with Somalia holds significant economic and geopolitical importance, particularly due to its close proximity to oil resources in the Arabian Gulf region. Furthermore, Somalia functions as a conduit for access to Central and South Africa, acting as a connection between the Indian Ocean and the nations bordering the waters of the Red Sea and the Nile Basin. Somalia's geostrategic position imparts regional and worldwide significance, influencing and being influenced by political, economic, and security matters of both regional and global relevance, now and in the future (Woodward, 2006).

Since 2001, the U.S. policy toward Somalia has relied on regional partners, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia, without directly intervening in the country. This strategy has attracted some Somali parties who demonstrate their understanding and acceptance of the U.S. stance. Additionally, the security component has significantly influenced the political and economic aspects of this policy, given the unstable internal security situation in Somalia since 1991 (Ali, 2024).

Despite Somalia's strategic importance and the region's significance to the United States, which views it as a top foreign interest, the country's precarious security situation has influenced US policy toward it. Extremist groups have directly influenced United States interests with terrorist attacks in Somalia, affecting not only the interior of Somalia but also the Horn of Africa and even East Africa⁹.

Among the many interests and objectives of the United States in Somalia is the creation of a national government that is both stable and democratic and this is mostly a political aim. In addition to halting the recruitment of Somalis by terrorist groups, the United States seeks to improve Somalia's economic situation by lowering unemployment and increasing job opportunities. Since Somalia has the longest coastline in Africa and a commanding vantage point over the Indian Ocean, it is well positioned to oversee the oil pipelines in the Arabian Gulf, Bab al-Mandab, and the Gulf of Aden, which is the source of the strategic objectives. Simultaneously, the security objectives mirrored the fight against terrorist groups, specifically Al-Qaeda and the Al-Shabaab movement. There were humanitarian objectives as well, with an emphasis on reducing the human suffering in Somalia. The United States adopted a variety of tactics to achieve these goals, reflecting the range of American interests and aspirations¹⁰.

The United States' interests in Somalia include, among other things, positively assisting in the establishment of a democratic and stable national government, as they assert. The United States is actively working to improve Somalia's economic status by reducing unemployment rates and increasing job opportunities, while simultaneously preventing terrorist groups from recruiting

⁹ Chatham House, "Understanding US Policy in Somalia," July 2020, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/07/understandingus-policy-somalia>

¹⁰ Fedirka, A. (2017, May 10). Allison Fedirka. <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/us-cares-somalia>.

Somalis, which may primarily be a political objective. In addition, the strategic goals originate from the oil pipelines in the Arabian Gulf, Bab al-Mandab, and the Gulf of Aden, and Somalia is in a prime position to monitor them due to its long coastline and dominant location over the Indian Ocean. Simultaneously, the security goals mirrored the fight against terrorist organizations, specifically Al-Qaeda and the Al-Shabaab movement. Along with these humanitarian goals, we sought to alleviate human suffering in Somalia. As a reflection of the diversity of American interests and ambitions, the United States used a wide range of strategies to accomplish these objectives (Williams, 2020).

As the United States grew increasingly concerned that Somalia could serve as a hiding place for Al-Qaeda leaders, they established Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti as the only United States military station on the African continent. They also supported the Ethiopian invasion that destroyed the Islamic Courts Union and provided air assistance in 2006 to eradicate the hardline Islamists in power at the time. The piracy problem also signified a significant expansion into Somali maritime boundaries, with several US and Western warships gathering under the pretense of combating piracy. After deciding to deploy regional troops to support the fragile transitional Somali administrations, Ethiopia rejoined these forces in 2012, who are now engaged in conflict with the al-Shabaab organization (Qureshi, 2010).

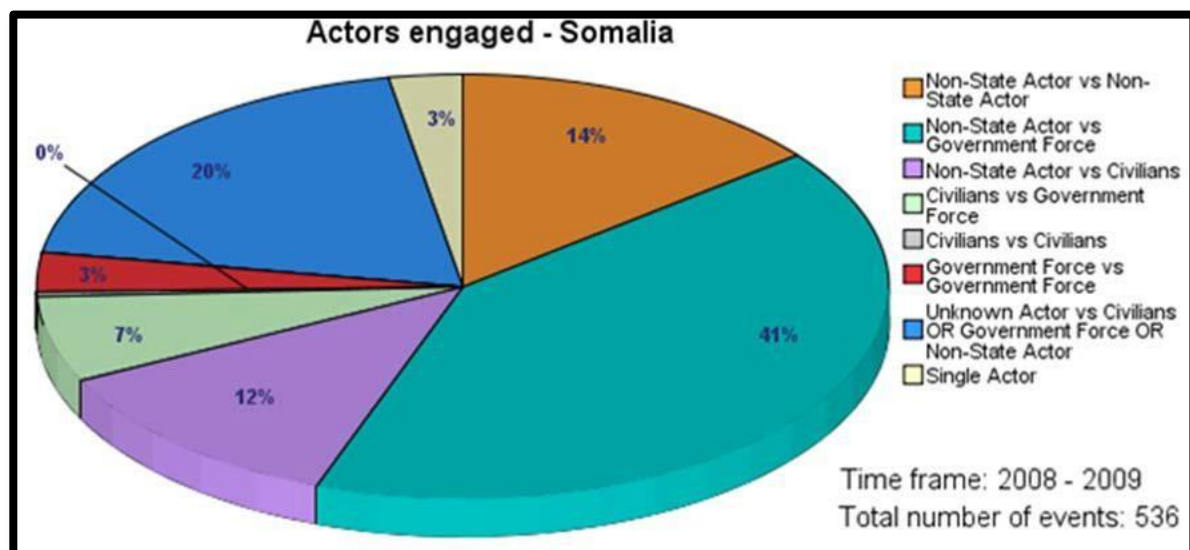
The interventions and influences of regional powers: Ethiopia has provided support and training to certain Somali factions, motivated by its desire to maintain a fragmented and weakened Somalia, thereby hindering any recovery of the Somali Ethiopian region. Furthermore, Ethiopia aims to maintain instability in Somalia as a means to legitimize its territorial claims over other regions it has appropriated from Somalia. Ethiopia and Kenya, despite occasional disagreements over their objectives, strategically aim to maintain Somalia as a weak and amicable neighbor for two primary reasons. Ethiopia and Kenya argue that the emergence of a strong state in Somalia could renew desires for a greater Somalia, a concern intensified by the presence of powerful and well-organized Islamist factions within the country, as well as an active business class in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, Ethiopia and Kenya claim that their national security issues, namely, those related to extremists and nationalists, originate from Somalia (Hussein, 2016).

Ethiopia has emerged as a significant player in the internal conflict of Somalia, both before and after the breakdown of the Somali central government. Ethiopia has justified its actions in Somalia by highlighting the increasing security concerns presented by the Al-Shabaab organizations for its national security. This is particularly significant given that Somalia has consistently provided a conducive environment for terrorist activities over the previous decade. This has strengthened Ethiopia's political, military, and intelligence presence, thereby enhancing Addis Ababa's power in the region. Ethiopia's involvement primarily stems from its ability to mitigate security threats from armed rebel factions, which pose a threat to both its own security and the broader regional stability. Additionally, Ethiopia's numerous attacks in Somalia have allowed it to expand its influence beyond its borders (Ingiriis M. , 2018).

Kenya, one of Somalia's neighbors, is the second most involved country in the internal conflicts in Somalia. In 2002, Kenya organized a reconciliation conference uniting the conflicting Somali groups along with pertinent regional and international actors. This proposal builds upon Kenya's previous initiatives, the most recent of which was a reconciliation conference between

the transitional government and opposition factions in November 2001 and this was followed by an expanded conference in December of the same year, which resulted in separate agreements between the government and three opposition groups¹¹.

Figure: actors that engaged in Somalia



The above figure indicates the actors engaged in Somalia for the last years, and it indicates that the Banadir area in Somalia accounted for nearly half of the combat incidents in 2008 and 2009, with Hiraan and Bay following closely behind. Sixty per cent of the occurrences were battles without a change of site, while twenty-seven per cent featured violence against people. The proportion of the latter fell slightly from 30% in 2008 to 25% in 2009¹².

Somalia and Kenya's maritime border dispute is among the most significant and long-standing in the Horn of Africa, and a territorial disagreement over an area in the Indian Ocean is at the root of the current political crisis between the two countries. While Somalia prefers that the marine boundary follow the same southeastern trajectory as the land border, Kenya is in favor of drawing it parallel to the latitude line. Consequently, this direction focuses on the origins of the conflict between both countries, considering the studied territory and its geostrategic significance, which has caused it to be disputed by several regional and international powers. Using the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as a guide, Somalia wants to set up its maritime borders along the coast, running horizontally along the latitude line and heading southeast. This is one of the most comprehensive international treaties that governs the discovery and use of natural resources found on the maritime and oceans in addition the Convention also regulates scientific research techniques and contains rules to protect the maritime environment from contamination¹³. Somali and Turkish ties go back to the sixteenth

¹¹ Intellectualism amid Ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 Factor. In Bildhaan (Vol. 9).

<https://segments.noblogs.org/files/2014/08/intellectualism-ethnocentrism.pdf>.

¹² Khan, M. Y., & Panwar, A. (2017). Armed conflicts and natural resources. ResearchGate.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318199519>.

¹³ BBC News. (2021, October 12). ICJ rejects Kenya case in Somalia maritime border row.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica-58885535>.

century under the Ottoman Empire, which strengthened its control over the Horn of Africa to secure maritime access in the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf against invading European powers. The Ottoman Empire established Somalia as a sphere of influence, with Berbera and Zeila serving as its focal points. In the late eighteenth century, the decline of the Ottoman Empire led European colonial powers to seize control of Somalia. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey, which sought to establish a new state while maintaining its independence and sovereignty, the bilateral relationship between the two countries intensified. During this period, Turkey and Somalia formalized diplomatic ties by inaugurating embassies in both nations, and Ankara revitalized their partnership with a modest assistance initiative for Somalia (Siradag, 2016). According to Brendon J. Cannon, some international positions, opposing Turkish involvement in Somalia point out that Turkey is not the only foreign organization in the region; other countries are also making efforts to establish their presence. Consequently, Turkish influence will undoubtedly face challenges, including both rejectionist and competitive responses. The neighboring countries in the region, and particularly the Arab states, did not collectively support the establishment of a Turkish military facility in Mogadishu due to the perceived danger to their national security. The Egyptian government saw Turkish influence in Somalia, particularly the military installation in Mogadishu, as a danger to its national security, prompting it to counteract this influence by intensifying its presence in Somalia. In 2016, it provided military assistance to the Somali army and inaugurated a solar power facility with a specified capacity¹⁴.

Table 1. Turkish supports to Somalia, the key areas

Item	Description	Explanation
1	Budgetary support	Monthly budgetary support
2	Political support through diplomacy	Organizing International conferences/awareness campaigns through diplomatic channels
3	Peacebuilding through reconciliation	Somalia-Somaliland talks
4	Institution building/capacity building	Knowledge sharing, trainings, and equipping with skills to government's personnel
5	Social and economic infrastructure development	Building schools, hospitals, roads, ports, and airports.
6	Strengthening Security institutions	Providing training, equipment, building military training camp and bringing Somali army personnel to Turkey for further training

In most cases, Turkey provides support to multiple areas, with a primary focus on the southern regions. They hold monthly budgetary support and organizational conferences, share knowledge and equipment, and provide military training for Somali armies. The above table shows in detail.

¹⁴ Cannon, B. J. (2016, November 15). Deconstructing Turkey's efforts in Somalia. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2872980

In conclusion, Turkey's involvement in the reconciliations and negotiations for the Somalia conflicts positively influenced the international community's efforts, and Turkey has positioned itself as a host for conferences addressing the crisis in Somalia. Turkey facilitated donor conferences, Somali reconciliation meetings, and the activities of civil society groups, which aided in the restoration of peace and security in the Somali territory. The Turkish government facilitated the alleviation of tensions and conflicts between Somalia and the adjacent regional nations of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan via its diplomatic presence at the embassy in Mogadishu (Sharif., 2020).

Egypt's departure as the Ottoman Empire's representative created a strategic vulnerability that facilitated the colonial domination of Somalia. European countries with imperial aspirations established this accord at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, at the suggestion of the German chancellor. The conferences resolved to partition the continent and prioritize mutual interests among the sixteen countries, rather than a potential conflict among those poised to conquer it.

Additionally, European colonial governance in Somalia persisted for over eight decades, resulting in several effects that continue to influence Somalis on an extensive level (ADEBAJO, 2005).

The African Union is an organization that actively advocates for peace and stability in African content, particularly in the unstable region of Somalia. Conflicts are frequently occurring in Africa, affecting almost every part of the continent. The multifaceted nature of African wars and the dangerous internal, regional, and worldwide consequences resulting from their persistence at all levels and stages make addressing them a significant task for the continent. International actors and the African Union have given special attention to the Somali crisis, which has deteriorated to a catastrophic level. The total collapse of Somalia left it vulnerable in all sectors, especially security, education, and health, making it the most perilous catastrophe in Africa's history. The complicated situation and consequences of the issue substantiate this argument. The African Union significantly and effectively complemented the work of the United Nations. It attempted to manage the crisis via peaceful and diplomatic means¹⁵.

4.0 POSITIVE INFLUENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

The persistent political and security instability in Somalia in recent years has hindered the attempts of successive Somali administrations to rebuild all the government institutions. Consequently, international actors have undertaken many initiatives to reconstruct the Somali institutions. Despite this, each project was different and had an effect on the different groups of soldiers who were fighting. This was because the army's demographics have become tribal over the past few years, and many international actors rushed to implement laws that would rebuild and equip the Somali military at home. They leveraged the African Union peacekeeping presence to their advantage, aiming to restore stability in Somalia to prevent further security and political turmoil in the Horn of Africa region. This aligned with their strategic objectives, as they sought to safeguard their status, enhance their political and security power, and fortify their worldwide standing.

¹⁵ ACCORD. (2020, February 10). Conflict and conflict resolution in Africa – ACCORD.
<https://www.accord.org.za/ajcrissues/conflict-and-conflict-resolution-in-africa>.

It is still debatable whether the UN was successful in achieving a political solution to the Somali civil war, despite the fact that it was effective in halting the starvation that killed more than a thousand Somalis after the fall of the central government. Despite the Somali government's unwillingness to acknowledge foreign involvement in the aftermath of the breakdown of state institutions, it accomplished the objectives established by the United Nations. Disarmament, humanitarian assistance, infrastructure protection, security force training, refugee repatriation, and a secure environment are all declared objectives of the United Nations in all UN Security Council resolutions. The United Nations saw the continuing fighting between Somali troops as a danger to world peace and security; thus, they determined that helping people in need should be the primary objective of this mission¹⁶.

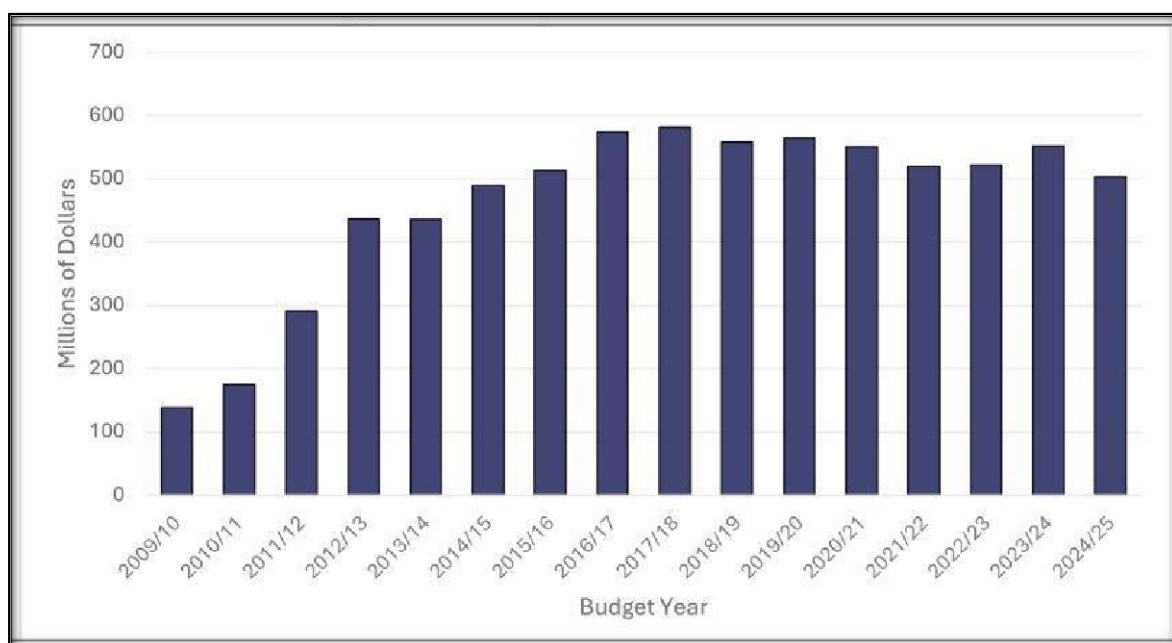


Figure 2. United Nations Support Office Accepted Budget

The above figure shows the United Nations support office budget expenses for the last years and support for the multiple sections in mostly logistics budgets for every year, although they are in different budget allocations, and there are peacekeeping contributions¹⁷.

The United States of America took part in training the Somali army years after the collapse of the Somali central government in the 1990s, following the material and human losses caused by Somali armed factions in the operational stage after the fall of the Siyad Barre government. The United States of America's support for the Somali army included financial and logistical assistance, training specific military groups like the Danab and Gashan forces, and creating

¹⁶ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2024, December 2). Somalia intervention | UN Peacekeeping, US Military & Humanitarian Aid. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Somalia-intervention>.

¹⁷ Williams, P. D. & the United Nations Support Office. (2024). https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2409_The-UN-Support-Office-ModelSomaliaweb.pdf.

various military outposts around the country for fighting the Al-Shabaab organizations (Williams, Building the Somali National Army: Anatomy of a failure, 2008–2018, 2019).

Humanitarian considerations primarily motivated the United Nations' initial desire to intervene in Somalia's conflicts. The conflict between rival factions was so severe that several regions of the country experienced extreme starvation, complicating the delivery of foreign supplies due to the intensity of the violence. Nonetheless, changes in the political and security landscape in Somalia progressively resulted in the broadening of the goals guiding the United Nations' operations in the nation. Security Council decisions concerning Somalia predicated on Chapter VII of the Charter, which permits peacekeeping troops to use military force to achieve their designated purposes¹⁸. The European Union has actively contributed to the reconstruction of Somalia by offering skills, financial assistance, and training to Somali forces in recent years as part of its strategy to enhance regional stability in the Horn of Africa, which includes securing the Red Sea and combating terrorist organizations and Somali piracy to safeguard international trade transiting through the Bab El-Mandeb Channel and the European Union is one of the main donors to the African Union peacekeeping force; it has given around \$2.4 billion since 2007. the Union has three operations in Somalia: the European Union Training Mission, which was formed in February 2010 to train and assist Somali troops; it had trained more than 6,891 Somali soldiers by August 2020, in addition to the naval force and the capacity-building mission. In March 2019, the European Union Training Mission in Somalia executed a live-fire exercise in collaboration with the Somali Maritime Police Unit to safeguard the port of Mogadishu and enhance Somali security capabilities. The Union established a training center for Somali forces in Kampala, Uganda, with participation from 14 European countries aimed at training the Somali army.¹⁹

The Turkish government has used a "soft power" strategy to gain access and create influence in Somalia, alongside its "hard power" approach. Turkey has positioned itself as a host for conferences addressing challenges in Somalia, and Turkey facilitated donor conferences, Somali reconciliation meetings, and the activities of civil society groups, which contributed to the rebuilding of peace and security inside Somali territory. The Turkish government has facilitated the resolution of conflicts and dissatisfaction between Somalia and the neighboring countries of Kenya and Ethiopia through its diplomatic influence in Mogadishu and its involvement in the commercial sector. The benefits Turkey and Somalia receive from enhancing their bilateral agreements and relationships demonstrate the economic dimension. (Çelik, 2015)

Cooperation agreements between the two countries signed, including an agreement and a memorandum of understanding for the period 2013–2018, notably including the Investment Cooperation Agreement, the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, and the Tax Cooperation Agreement. Regarding the memoranda of understanding, there exists a memorandum concerning agricultural production, marine fishing, the health sector, and the Economic Cooperation Committee between Somalia and Turkey. Turkish allocations in

¹⁸ UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA II (UNOSOM II) - Background (Full text). (n.d.). <https://peacekeeping.un.org/ar/mission/past/unosom2backgr2.html>.

¹⁹ Williams, P. D., & Ali, H. Y. (2020). THE EUROPEAN UNION TRAINING MISSION IN SOMALIA: AN ASSESSMENT. In SIPRI Background Paper [Report]. SIPRI. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/bp_2011_eutm_somalia_0.pdf.

Somalia have significantly expanded due to their separation from other commercial activities, resulting in a powerful and trustworthy influence both within Somalia and internationally. The Turkish firm Favori LLC assumed control of Adam Ade International Airport according to a Turkish-Somali agreement for a duration of 10 years. The company's primary responsibilities include safeguarding airport security and citizen safety, inspecting baggage, providing administrative and logistical support to airport personnel, and advancing airport development to align with standards of other advanced countries²⁰.

In order to explain the issues, Turkey founded the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali population. Numerous Turkish relief workers, physicians, and politicians converged to create field hospitals and provide medical help. It founded several educational institutions, places of worship, orphanages, and Quran memorizing institutes. It established the biggest Turkish embassy in the city, Mogadishu. It conducted routine humanitarian and development missions. An assistance program initiated, business operations commenced, and bilateral visits between the two nations proliferated (Sıradağ, 2015).

Following the beginning of the civil war in Somalia after the collapse of the central government in 1993 and the ensuing instability, the Turkish government opened its embassy in Mogadishu. Although it ceased diplomatic representation, the Turkish government persisted in delivering assistance and humanitarian initiatives. It also engaged in the first United Nations intervention in Somalia, deploying a contingent of 300 infantry soldiers and 3 warships to Mogadishu under the command of Lieutenant General Shafiq Bir. This army began operations in 1996 to tackle the drought and hunger problems in Somalia and in 1998, Turkey implemented a program of engagement with Africa to progressively enhance its political, cultural, and economic ties with African nations²¹.

Kenya is a significant regional country in East Africa, sharing certain aspects with Somalia, particularly geographical and ethnic, since both belong to neighboring countries. Additionally, one of the five parts of Somalia that the country stated was acquired by Kenya is now referred to as the North Eastern Province, which has led to tensions between the two countries. The political issues between the two countries have been made worse by the presence of a Somali ethnic minority in Kenya, particularly in the North Eastern and Coastal Provinces, alongside a Muslim minority sympathetic to Somalia, which has experienced political, economic, and social discrimination by the Kenyan government (Holla, 2021).

Security is the most important thing for Kenya when it comes to its relationship with Somalia. This is especially clear when it comes to terrorist activities coming from Somalia, mostly from the AlShabab group, and the security problems those Somali refugees in Kenya cause. Muslims, particularly those of Somali descent, have experienced persecution from Kenyan authorities and security services, who regard them with suspicion, alleging connections with extremism and terrorism groups (Abdullahi, 2022).

²⁰ Türkiye, Somalia sign agreement on defense, economic cooperation. (n.d.).

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/turkiyesomalia-sign-agreement-on-defense-economiccooperation/3132095>.

²¹ <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-somalia.en.mfa>.

Ethiopia is heavily involved in the internal conflicts in Somalia, a fact they claim has negatively influenced their security. Additionally, Ethiopia relies on the international community's concerns about the potential security void created by the departure of Ethiopian soldiers, which could lead to further instability in the Somali security landscape and the resurgence of warlord governance. The Ethiopian military presence in Somalia has intensified the country's instability and adversely affected peacebuilding and state-building initiatives. Certain individuals think that Ethiopia aims to divide Somalia to ensure its continued weakness and fragmentation, thereby mitigating any potential security concerns in the future. Ethiopia's inability to win a military victory in Mogadishu, along with Somalia's continued weakness and fragmentation, supports the idea that Ethiopia's main goal in the Somali interior is to keep its regional dominance and increase its influence in the coming years (Aimé, 2006).

5.0 THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

Somalia is one of the significant countries in the Horn of Africa, and the Horn of Africa is historically an area of significant geopolitical conflict that is currently experiencing a novel struggle along its coasts. The Gulf Arab governments and Turkey are intensifying their efforts to secure friends and expand their influence in the Horn. The primary political divisions in the Middle East are between Iran and Arab nations and among Arab governments themselves, and they are growing more obvious along the Red Sea region. These durable, interlocking conflicts are worsening present regional conflicts while generating new ones. African authorities, with Gulf governments and their Western allies, are initiating discussions on how to prevent an increase of competition into clear conflict. An increasing group of politicians in the Horn of Africa argues that the area should enhance its negotiating influence, for example, by pursuing multilateral engagement with the Gulf and Turkey. Considering their substantial influence as colleagues, investors, donors, and mediators, the countries of the Gulf and Turkey need to use this power to mitigate violence in the region rather than fuel it.

Following the Somali state's attainment of sovereignty, the Cold War intensified, and the country faced political and economic challenges that increased its susceptibility to the manipulations of major powers. Upon its establishment, the state had fiscal challenges and required substantial assistance to sustain its finances in general. In addition, the British, Italian, Ethiopian, and French colonial territories divided the Somali country into four parts. British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland achieved independence and established the Somali Republic, whereas Somalis in the other regions faced deprivation of rights, as seen in the Somali region of Ethiopia, or marginalization, as experienced in the British colony of Kenya²².

Concerning the reason for international and American involvement in Somalia, two years after the fall of the Siyad Barre regime and the start of chaos and conflict among Somalis fighting for control and influence over their territory, which led to a terrible civil war and famine that hurt children, women, and the elderly, especially in the western and southern regions, the United Nations passed resolutions that made it easier for the US to send troops into Somalia and the Somali case illustrates how the involved parties managed the conflict's consequences, avoiding the need for concessions towards a resolution and in addition Spending peaked due to the American involvement, since the conflict's significant costs yielded conflicting

²² Pifadmin. (2013, May 8). Somalia - FPIF. Foreign Policy in Focus. <https://fpif.org/somalia/>.

outcomes. On one side, it diminishes the capacity of the opposing factions to sustain the battle, resulting in significant material and human depletion. Nevertheless, the excessive expense may escalate the conflict to an impossible state. The process of settlement and national reconciliation in Somalia has expanded with the increasing involvement of many countries as well as third parties. This has led to bad things happening, like more efforts by regional parties and fights between them, as well as attempts by neighboring countries to change the Somali settlement process in a way that benefits them (AHMED, 2020).

According to the Stephen Burge, the aims of the United States in Somalia remain consistent, while the interests may vary. The United States' engagement with the Somali issue extended beyond simply recommendations and support for Ethiopia at the United Nations; it established multiple objectives to execute its strategy via Ethiopia. Additionally, the United States sought to fortify Ethiopia's alliance with itself, uphold support for collective security initiatives of the free world, and assist Ethiopia in achieving political stability and economic advancement. This strategy aimed to illustrate the advantages of friendly collaboration with the United States on the broader African continent while ensuring the continued utilization of existing military facilities and acquiring further military rights as necessary. In addition, the United States intended to restrict and reduce communist and Egyptian influence in Ethiopia and throughout Africa (Burge, 2015).

It is widely agreed that the Gulf crisis significantly influenced Somali internal politics and was a primary factor in the ongoing conflict between the federal government and regional administrations. The federal government adopted an impartial stance on the Gulf crisis, urging all parties to engage in negotiations to resolve their disputes. However, this approach was rejected by certain states, which opposed the federal government's position, citing their obligations to specific Gulf States as a reason for their support, regardless of the validity of those states' claims. This stance clearly violates the Somali interim constitution, which, despite acknowledged inconsistencies, grants the federal government the authority to determine foreign policy. Additionally, the federal government has repeatedly criticized multiple countries for entering into trade and cooperation agreements with certain states without consulting the federal government²³. The significance of relationships between Somalia and Arab countries was limited to political responsibilities and the carrying out of humanitarian initiatives in Somalia, which mostly remained unsatisfied. The Arab reaction was insufficient in supporting the exploration and characteristics of Somalia after its significant worsening during the 1990s. These initiatives did not resolve the Somali challenge, making the Somali conflict unsolvable from the political perspective of Arab leaders. The influence of the Gulf countries in Somalia is expanding, with interest intensifying periodically, particularly since the beginning of the Yemeni conflict in mid-2015. The Horn of Africa has garnered increased attention from Gulf states, notably the Kingdom of the United Arab Emirates, which have recently implemented an agreement with Somaliland to establish a military base at Berbera Airport. This agreement, which has been in discussion for over twenty years, has generated controversy in Mogadishu (Viktor Marsai, 2023).

²³ Danish Institute for International Studies. (2019, May 1). Gulf state rivalries in the Horn of Africa: Time for a Red Sea policy? DIIS. <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/gulf-state-rivalries-in-the-horn-of-africa-time-a-red-sea-policy>.

There is a big difference between having economic and political influence in a discussion. Some Arab allies of the United States helped Somalia by giving money, humanitarian aid, trade, development projects, and a variety of investment agreements. However, their political influence did not live up to expectations compared to Turkey, which strengthened its position in the Somali political arena. Turkey's achievements, in contrast to the failings of some Western Arab friends, have transformed the Horn of Africa into a battleground between the two factions, and in addition, the expanding Turkish influence in a critical strategic region for Africa, the Middle East, and the entire world has caused worries among several Arab countries opposed to its ambition. The countries connected to the West have emerged as the most serious opponents to the Turkish strategy in that region (Hovhannisyan, 2022).

According to Brendon J. Cannon Ethiopia is heavily involved in the internal conflict in Somalia, both directly and indirectly, because it does not need any other strong countries in the region. Among the goals of the new incoming leaders are regional and international relations, particularly those of the parties involved in the Somali problem, especially Ethiopia, which is directly affected by the Somali conflict. Ethiopians have been involved in the Somali conflict for more than twenty years via internal allies like warlords and federal state cantons, they have had an indirect influence on Somali affairs for decades, and Ethiopia's role in establishing several regimes demonstrates its influence in Somali politics (Cannon, 2019).

6.0 CONCLUSION

Over the last thirty years, Somalis and the global world have endeavored to restore the Somali state. However, disagreements persist regarding the most appropriate governance structure to manage Somalia's economic, political, and social challenges. Despite these grievances, the various Somali clans coexisted in all the major cities, with some settling there for centuries. However, during the civil war, Somali factions led by warlords committed numerous atrocities against civilians, killing tens of thousands and displacing millions. One of the most important issues for East Africa to analyze in depth is the situation in Somalia. Pre-colonial and colonial legacies, which are the root cause of numerous challenges and conflicts, complicate Somali nation-building and lead to the fracturing of political boundaries within the Somali ethnic group. This ethnic group consistently strives to unite its fragmented elements beyond the "sacred" colonial boundaries, thereby posing a challenge to the geopolitical stability of the Horn of Africa. Consequently, the establishment of a Somali state faces opposition from both regional powers and the global community.

In the case of the Somalia conflicts, humanitarian intervention has become a contentious issue in both political and legal spheres. This is especially important now that human rights are getting more attention around the world. There are many domestic conflicts where basic human rights are being violated, sometimes to the point where international crimes against humanity and genocide are committed. The most powerful countries are attempting to undermine national sovereignty in favor of the preferences of the international community. They are also attempting to establish precedents that, when replicated, become obligatory conventional legal norms. Conversely, smaller nations endeavor to adhere to the UN Charter since it constrains the autonomy of larger nations in pursuing their objectives. The three challenges identified in the post-independence era pose significant obstacles to solidifying the state's foundations, attaining sustainable development, and ensuring political stability for all, both in the short and

long term. On the other hand, the two challenges highlighted in the pre-independence period represent the fundamental impediment to establishing a state that harmonizes past events with geopolitical realities and aligns contemporary international politics with national aspirations and demographic realities. To overcome these obstacles, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive examination of the facts supporting the national unity choice and collaborative endeavors to achieve the unification of the Somali lands.

Additionally, Turkey has begun to respond favorably in this regard, implementing commendable measures to support the principal Somali factions in this area, demonstrating an honest and increasing commitment.

Somalia is one of the African nations that suffered from a decade of civil and clan conflict. The inability to establish connections among its people based on citizenship, as compared with belief, religion, or ethnicity, led to the total breakdown of the Somali state. Following the power of several groups over the state and the marginalization of others, a loss of belonging resulted, allowing influential parties to use the declining circumstances to pursue detrimental activities at the expense of state development. Following this, a collapse of economic, educational, and social infrastructure led to a devastating hunger crisis, positioning Somalia as one of the nations most affected by poverty, illness, and human rights violations.

Turkey has attained significant achievements in Somalia, notably establishing a prominent international and regional standing due to Somalia's strategic location, facilitating economic recovery through the development of a new market for its goods and investment opportunities, alongside Somalia's natural resources. In addition, the daily airline connections between Istanbul and Mogadishu have enabled Turkey take advantage to display its effective international role, employing soft power that has positively influenced its image among the Somali populace, who have received it favorably and this encouraged the implementation of differentiated diplomacy to educate Somali society and foster the country's development and modernization through infrastructure enhancements, including schools, hospitals, roads, and universities. Additionally, the Turkish government participated in a competition among international powers to establish military bases beyond its borders, particularly in strategic locations that enhance its influence on the region's political landscape, culminating in the establishment of a military base in Mogadishu, with the specific mission of training and preparing the Somali army.

Lastly, not at least the strategic significance of Ethiopia and Somalia prompted the United States to engage in the conflict between both countries in order to fulfill its regional objectives. Mutual interests characterized the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia, with each party leveraging the other to attain its ambitions. The United States capitalized on the poverty and plight of the Ethiopian populace, as well as Emperor Haile Selassie's aspirations for territorial expansion, alongside Ethiopia's reliance on foreign aid. Conversely, Ethiopia took advantage of the Cold War dynamics and the United States' necessity for a strong ally in a region largely unaffected by colonialism. Their relationship was fundamentally utilitarian, driven by the respective needs of each party.

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