

HUMANITARIAN
AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME

Summary of
SOMALIA PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS
A five year outlook

November 2015

HUMANITARIAN FORESIGHT THINK TANK

INTRODUCTION

Since the ousting of Siad Barre, Somalia is considered as the exemplary failed state characterized by a collapse of government structures, ongoing conflict, a militant insurgency, high levels of poverty and a precarious humanitarian situation. In recent years, there have been some positive developments and nascent indications of stability are emerging in the country. The formation of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2012 established the country's first permanent administration since 1991¹, marking the end of the flawed Transitional Federal Government's eight-year rule. However, the country still faces a wide array of challenges posing a great risk to continued progress. The lacking legislative and institutional framework, logistical and security constraints, renders the initially planned popular vote in 2016 unachievable. The contested federalization process remains slow in its implementation and is a critical source of tension and disputes.

The underlining drivers of conflict, such as the presence of clannism, armed groups, poor governance, poverty, land disputes and resource scarcity, persist and keep the country trapped in a cycle of violence. Al-Shabaab remains the biggest threat to the security environment. The group has proven its resilience and is continuously engaged in asymmetric warfare against Somali, AMISOM and international forces. The government remains highly dependent on international forces and AMISOM, which is increasingly compromised by the conflicting agendas of its contributing countries.

Donors' are increasingly hesitant to commit humanitarian aid in a country plagued by rampant corruption and economic mismanagement, which means that a likely overall cut in humanitarian funding, will pose a significant challenge in the future. The humanitarian situation remains dire and the population is extremely vulnerable to external shocks. High levels of poverty prevail and 3.1 million live on the margins of food insecurity with a population of 1.1 million people internally displaced².

¹ Following the new parliament's inauguration, its members in September 2012 elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the country's president

² Danish Institute for International Studies (September 2015) Somali elections in 2016.

Key Trends

- While the political situation is likely to remain fragile, dominated by internal fighting, corruption and clan rivalries, the current administration is expected to remain in power until elections are held in 2016.
- The shift towards federal state building is expected to continue but progress is likely to be slow, hindered by clan, federal and regional tensions. The government of Somaliland will continue to seek international recognition as a sovereign state, but it is unlikely to succeed in the near future.
- Households and communities will be unable to breakout of the spiral of asset losses and poverty as the conflict and lack of governance continues to stymie sustainable economic development.
- High humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities are likely to prevail in the country. Funding cuts and increasingly conflicting government legislation are anticipated to be major challenges for NGO's operating in the country.
- With limited opportunities the youth bulge in Somalia is anticipated to lead to increasing levels of opportunistic violence and criminality as well as providing a ready source of manpower for recruitment into militias and gangs.
- The conflict in Somalia is anticipated to continue in the face of the ineffectual FGS as non-state actors have access to conflict resources and public support. The focus on pursuing an anti-terrorist, anti-Al-Shabaab agenda is expected add to the insecurity experienced by the local population as it will increase the number of security incidences but will not comprehensively address the causes of broader chronic insecurity.
- High levels of criminality in Somalia are likely to continue as established illicit economies and a lack of legal wealth generating alternatives persist. This is aggravated by the absence of the rule of law, as the federal government will be unable to provide comprehensive security and policing.
- The economy is presumed to experience slow growth and gradual improvement in areas under government/AMISOM control, but will be vulnerable to shocks as it is highly dependent on remittances and agriculture. A lack of economic reform, political uncertainty and continuing insecurity will limit progress, and aid dependency will remain high.
- The mismanagement of natural resources and prolific pollution will result in environmental damage and undermine the ability of Somali communities to use their resources sustainably. The lack of good governance around critical resources such as water and valuable resources such as oil is likely to continue to inspire conflict and undermine the government's ability to legitimize their control.

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation in the country remains characterized by high levels of needs and vulnerabilities however, the absence of data and access makes it difficult to identify most vulnerable communities. The humanitarian situation is likely to remain dire and decreasing or fluctuating funding is likely to constitute a major challenge. While the government is extending control over territories increased access to affected population is likely to improve, but access will remain a challenge. Resilience continues to be low and external shocks in particular natural hazards pose a major threat, as adaptable communities may survive climatic disruptions to their livelihoods their lack of resilience will make it extremely challenging for them to mitigate consequences. A climatic shock such as the current El Nino could therefore trigger mass displacement and, combined with lack of access to affected populations, rapidly escalate the humanitarian need in country. The resilience capacities of the communities are anticipated to remain low, as the context is unlikely to evolve significantly to enable longer-term development programming.

There has been a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country over recent months. Overall 3.2 million people are dependent on humanitarian aid, with the number of people in crisis or emergency estimated to be 855,000 and 2.3 million people are food-stressed³. Food security is expected to deteriorate and within the period from August to December 2015 with an estimated 343,400 children expected to suffer from acute malnutrition including 63,400 from severe acute malnutrition (SAM)⁴. Moreover, nationwide, global acute malnutrition (GAM) is at 13 per cent in the country, including a 2.3 per cent SAM prevalence⁵. Nutrition situation in Somalia remains serious with median GAM levels (10-14.9 per cent) accompanied by Alert SAM (1.1-2.4 per cent). While differences between the regions are evident food insecurity is likely to continue to be a major challenge in the country. The numbers in needs are expected to be higher if recalculated on the basis of the new 2014 UNFPA population data.

Child and maternal undernutrition in their acute and chronic forms remain endemic in Somalia and is likely to prevail. Especially, among young children and women in child bearing age, micronutrient deficiencies are widespread across the country. The substantial levels of undernutrition contribute to the high morbidity and mortality rates as well as the overall disease burden while also depriving young children of the opportunity to achieve optimal physical and cognitive development.

In the fragile Somali context, even small-scale natural hazards can have a devastating effect on people already suffering the consequences of armed conflict and displacement, coupled with the structural challenges and incomplete recovery from the 2011 famine. The current crisis is likely to be exacerbated by impact of El Nino, estimated to potentially affect 600 000 people in southern and central Somalia as well as 30,000 in Puntland. With an intensification of natural hazards due to climate change they are likely to contribute to a chronic cycle of vulnerability.

Protracted conflict, consecutive years of drought, natural hazards, and disruption of basic infrastructure have led to large-scale displacement in Somalia. The 1.1 million displaced people remain among the most vulnerable communities, facing high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and serious protection violations⁶. Somali returnees and refugees, fleeing the conflict in Yemen place additional stress on the capacities in the country, with the displaced communities

³ ECHO (October 2015). Factsheet Somalia

⁴ FEWS NET (31.08.2015). Alert Somalia

⁵ FSNAU (08.09.2015) Post Gu 2015 Food Security and Nutrition Outlook (August to December 2015)

⁶ ECHO (October 2015). Factsheet Somalia

particularly vulnerable to food shortages, violence, disease and forced evictions⁷. In addition, large-scale evictions of IDP's especially in Mogadishu have caused a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation of the displaced and have placed a further strain on the capacities of existing camps. Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable as they face the greatest risk of gender-based violence. Continued displacement and the safe return of IDP's will be a significant challenge for the government and humanitarian actors.

The coverage and quality of basic health services in Somalia is extremely low, mainly due to the absence or low capacity of existing structures. Therefore, the provision of health services remains weak, poorly resourced and unevenly distributed. An estimated 1.5 million people are without access to primary health services, including 300,000 children under five. This is likely to be exacerbated by funding shortages⁸. Health expenditure remains very low and there is a critical shortage of capacity in the health workforce, especially after many aid agencies have withdrawn health workers due to lack of funds⁹. There is a high prevalence of crude death rates in agro-pastoral areas of the Shabelle regions, among IDPs and urban populations in Mogadishu¹⁰.

Limited data exists on the humanitarian situation in Somalia as access constraints and over-reliance on few sources impedes an alternative deeper analysis of vulnerability. It is generally assumed that IDPs and urban poor are the most vulnerable, accounting for over 70 percent of the needs (according to FSNAU), not much understanding exists on the humanitarian situation in rural areas, especially those under the control of armed groups. These raises the question whether displaced population in camps are in worse situation than those in areas they originally fled from.

Due to the arid climate, water scarcity and the aftermath of the conflict access to clean water is a major challenge in Somalia. Moreover, existing water sources are inadequate in terms of accessibility, quality and quantity. Lack of access to safe water is prevalent in almost all parts of Somalia, where only an estimated of 30 per cent of Somalis have access to safe water, in worst affected areas in the south only 20 per cent of the population is assessed to have access to safe water. Moreover, poor hygiene and sanitation practices are major causes of diseases with only 39 per cent of the population with access to sanitation¹¹.

SCENARIOS

The following scenarios aim to provide a differing five-year outlook of how the situation might evolve in Somalia. Due to the complexity of the situation, the scenarios do not make a claim to include all possible outcomes of the future, but attempt to highlight key dynamics influencing developments and the wider context within the next five years. While there are nascent indicators towards an improvement of the situation, the context remains fragile, defined by political instability, on-going fighting and a high level of vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs.

WORKING ASSUMPTIONS:

1. Political instability is likely to prevail in the country
2. Chronic instability and conflict is anticipated to continue although the government with the support for AMISOM is likely to gradually extend its control over further territories

⁷ Human Rights Watch (10.04.2015). Somalia: Forced Evictions of Displaced People

⁸ UNOCHA (November 2015). Humanitarian needs overview Somalia 2015

⁹ FSNAU (02.10.2015). Post Gu 2015 Food Security and Nutrition Technical Report

¹⁰ FSNAU (16.10.2015) Nutrition Analysis Technical Series Report Post Gu 2015

¹¹ UNICEF. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Somalia

3. The humanitarian situation in the country is characterized by high levels of vulnerabilities and needs

STABILIZATION THROUGH FEDERALISM

The successful implementation of the federalization process creates legitimate and functional federal states, implementing rudimentary governance structures within their territories. Through a bottom-up approach the federal states contribute to the establishment of a strengthened and inclusive central government that is able to overcome flawed governance structures of previous administrations. Due to ensuring equal political representation and participation of the federal states and increased legitimacy through the 2016 elections the state government is able to establish functional state structures and extend them to a majority of the Somali territories. Nevertheless, while the relationship between the state and federal governments is strengthened, the relations between the central and federal government and the communities remain weak.

The gradual successful implementation of governance, acquired legitimacy as well as a reduction in corruption results in increased engagement between the Somali government, individual states and international actors. Increased international engagement is also facilitated through Somalia's gradually strengthened position and representation within the international community. The government supported by AMISOM is able to stabilize the security situation. Enhanced governance and increased capacity building among the local security forces further manifest this trend.

Furthermore, the economy gradually recovers from years of conflict. Stringent regulation and the increased rule of law reduce the revenue flows from illicit trade and make racketeering less profitable. While the resource scarcity places additional stress on the country, enhanced federal and state governance establish a system for fair management and distribution of resources, preventing further resource-based conflict. Despite increased access to education limited opportunities in the labour market prompt grievances among the large youth population.

While the humanitarian situation remains characterized by high levels of vulnerabilities, there is a gradual improvement in some regions. Access to affected communities improves with the government's increased territorial control. The gradual ameliorating security situation enables a slow return of refugees and IDP's to their villages of origin. Increased long-term funding lays the framework for humanitarian programming that gradually reduces vulnerabilities and enhances resilience building within the communities.

FRAGILITY PREVAILS

While there are slow improvements in governance, state structures remain weak and political fragility within the state and federal governments prevails, plagued by continued corruption and internal fighting. However, through a fairer system of representation following the 2016 elections a more inclusive government is established and is able to gradually extend its influence in the country. Relations between Somalia, regional neighbours and the wider international community are strengthened by constructive dialogue and engagement.

There are gradual improvements in the security environment in the country through the AMISOM presence, training of local security forces and a partial integration of armed groups. While the government remains reliant on external security forces, it is able to extend its control over territories and to push Al-Shabaab back in remote rural areas. Though Al-Shabaab's capabilities

are diminishing, the group is still able to strike anywhere in the country targeting government representatives and international actors. The wider security situation remains volatile, marked by sporadic clan fighting and the insurgency.

The economy continues to slowly grow, but remains highly depended on foreign aid and agriculture, making it vulnerable to external shocks such as natural hazards and market price fluctuations. Resource scarcity and unequal distribution of resources in absence of regulations continues to be a major driver of grievances as well as a trigger for clan conflicts. Powerful individuals and clans continue to draw significant profits from illicit economic activities in a largely unregulated space. Limited access to social services and few employment opportunities cause economic grievances and social unrest among the large youth population adding to further instability and triggering increased immigration to Europe.

There is little improvement in the humanitarian situation, which is defined by high levels of needs and vulnerabilities. The continued presence of NGOs and humanitarian operations prevents the situation from further deteriorating but are unable to meet the high needs in the country. Hence, limited resilience and development interventions are feasible aggravated by fluctuations in funding and limited access posing significant challenges to the humanitarian operations in the country.

CONFLICT RETURNS

The current administration continues to be plagued by corruption and internal fighting causing the collapse of government structures. Following the breakdown of the federal government and the ensuing power vacuum, the federal states become dysfunctional entities and fighting over the control of territories and resources erupts. The increased scarcity of resources coupled with the absence of state structures reinvigorates fighting between clans vying for control and results in a revival of large-scale conflict and a proliferation of armed groups. The interaction of the various conflict dynamics reinforces the downward spiral of insecurity in the country. Through the increased involvement of the frontline neighbouring states in the conflict, motivated by their own interests, insecurity spreads to the borderlands and the wider region.

In conditions of increased conflict and instability economic growth stagnates, standards of living fall and limited access to opportunities of legal employment and political representation heighten grievances across the country. Amid a lack of employment opportunities and limited access to education, the youth is plagued by socio-economic grievances. The disillusioned youth further contributes to the disintegration of the state, by increasingly engaging in criminal activities and serving as a willing recruitment pool for the armed groups.

While the international community is engaged in the mediation of the conflict, the country is considered a low priority due to other complex humanitarian emergencies and years of failed state building in Somalia, resulting in a decrease in humanitarian funding exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation, marked by high levels of people in need of assistance. The renewed fighting triggers mass internal displacement and the neighbouring countries struggle to reduce the refugee flows into their territories. Through limited access and decreased funding there are high levels of food insecurity and re-current outbreaks of diseases especially in the rural areas and IDP camps.

SOMALIA IN THE REGION

The on-going crisis in Somalia continues to have a significant impact on the entire Horn of Africa. Spill-over effects such as instability, refugee flows and spreading insecurity are evident in the neighbouring states. Moreover, there is a large degree of regional interconnectedness, in particular between Somalia and the frontline states (Ethiopia and Kenya) but Djibouti and Eritrea are also involved in the developments in Somalia. During the course of the conflict the neighbouring states have, and some continue to be, either parties in the conflict, supporting proxies or actively engaged in military intervention, primarily motivated by their own interests and agendas. The diverging interest of the neighbouring countries' involvement in Somalia was a major contributor to the conflict and persisting instability, as the countries weakened traditional governance structures, exploited rivalries between Somali clans, supported armed groups and implemented hegemonic structures.

The interplay of the various regional interests at stake in Somalia continues to be visible within AMISOM, which is increasingly weakened by the conflicting interest of its contributing states. Ethiopia and to lesser extent Kenya are operating outside the operational structures pursuing their target of establishing buffer zones¹² in order to eliminate zones of insecurity in their borderlands, as national domestic problems of security have complex borderland repercussions¹³. Besides their interest in national security, regional powers also exercise strong influence over the establishment of the Somali federal state. Ethiopia has been accused of acting as a spoiler in the creation of the interim Central State Administration, because its allies in Puntland and in Ahle Sunna oppose it¹⁴. Furthermore, AMISOM is experiencing a crisis of confidence in Somalia due to the involvement of regional states and its poor human rights record. AMISOM is likely to continue to face challenges in the country especially in light of a potential decrease of EU funding, worsening relations between the participatory states and increased pressure from Al-Shabaab.

Furthermore, the influx of refugees following the eruption of the civil war also underlines the regional implications of the conflict. Displacement has resulted in the spread of Somali refugees throughout the region. 973,306 Somali refugees are registered in 2015 as refugees in the neighbouring countries, with the most significant communities residing in Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen though Djibouti, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania also host part of the protracted caseload. Most of the refugees in the neighbouring countries remain confined to camps, facing hostile host states and the absence of legal protection. Dadaab stands as a symbol of the Somali refugee crisis and the repressive response by the Kenyan authorities, who increasingly apply pressure to repatriate of refugees. While the Kenyans are slowly reversing plans to relocate the displaced of the Dadaab within the next months to Somalia, an increased push for repatriation of refugees is likely to continue and several thousands of refugees are expected to be repatriated over the next years¹⁵. Further complicating the narrative of Somali displacement the conflict in Yemen, prompted the arrival almost 30 000 people, both Somali returnees and refugees¹⁶. While the influx is unlikely to significantly rise, Somalis are likely to continue to return with limited numbers of Yemenis refugees, adding additional strain on the country's capacities.

¹² Ethiopia's main interest has been to secure a buffer zone with Somalia by using militias led by allied warlords, such as Colonel Barre Adan Shire 'Hirale' in Gedo or Sufi groups such as Ahle Sunna wa Jama in Galgadud. Africa Confidential 08.10.2015. Amisom loses friends.

¹³ Chatham House (December 2009). Economic Drivers of Conflict and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa

¹⁴ Africa Confidential 08.10.2015. Amisom loses friends.

¹⁵ Voice of America (07.11.2015). Somalia Plans Organized Repatriation of Refugees

¹⁶ European Commission (October 2015). Factsheet Somalia

CONCLUSION

While there has been an improvement in the stabilization of Somalia in recent years, the country continues to face many challenges that undermine long-term stability. The process of federalisation remains highly contested causing disputes over territories and resources between the regions as well as between the central authorities and the various federal states. The political system remains plagued by inefficiency and corruption and the initial optimism following Sheikh Hassan election as president made room to widespread disillusion. A key component to establish legitimacy in the population and in the international community is the stabilization of the political system and a restoring of good governance in areas under TSF control. However, this is unlikely to occur in the near future as private interest, clan-based politics and rampant corruption remain a hindrance. The political fragility also has a significant impact on the wider country context and specifically the security situation. Al-Shabaab remains the main threat to the security situation in the country, with an increasingly struggling AMISOM under pressure from Al-Shabaab, conflicting interest of member's states and threats of decreasing EU funding. The government remains highly dependent on the foreign forces amid poor training, low morale and lack of payment of the SSF, increasingly turning the forces into a liability.

The security in the country is likely to only gradually improve, with the prolonged instability in Somalia will continue to act as an enabling environment for armed militias and terrorist groups. As a result, regional deployments in Somalia as well as international interventions within the war on terror frame will continue in the near outlook as dynamics of chronic instability and conflict remain undressed and the youth bulge, presence of armed groups and the complex clan system remain prevalent in the society causing volatility.

The humanitarian situation in the country remains characterized by high levels of needs and vulnerability, which are likely to persist. Decreasing funding is a major challenge and likely to impact negatively on the humanitarian situation. The legislative framework has also an increased impact on the humanitarian sector, considered as a major source of revenue, will be increasingly vulnerable to incoherent, arbitrary and conflicting legal and tax regulation on the national, federal and district level. ■

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