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AUGUST 2014 THE HYBRIDIZATION OF SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE  
FOR PEACE-BUILDING AND STATE-BUILDING IN SOMALIA

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*The collapse of the Somali central government and the ensuing anarchy resulted in major insecurity that compelled the indigenous population to seek alternative means to safeguard its livelihood. This led to the proliferation of non-state security actors, the rise in their legitimacy, and the emergence of hybridized security sector governance. This paper argues for the use of hybridized security governance to consolidate peace and state building in contemporary Somalia and gives insight into how neighboring countries and the international community might support Somali efforts to preserve peace. It suggests that the Somalia Federal Government should decentralize security sector governance and integrate traditional justice remedies and local militias into the governance structure with well-articulated roles and a system of accountability.*



## THE SOMALIA CONTEXT

The accumulation of warlords, Islamist militias, and terrorist groups is a threat to domestic stability, and regional and global security. After numerous failed attempts at political dialogue, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) came into existence in 2004. However, due to the weak capacity of the TFG, as well as the inconsistent approach of the international community, the Somali Federal Government (SFG) has been ineffectual at ramping up its security sector since its formation in 2012. In seeking to stabilize Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has been authorized to assist the Somali peace process and provide security to government officials and the general public.<sup>1</sup>

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In 2011, the TFG introduced a hybrid approach to security governance through its National Security and Stabilization Plan (NSSP) in order to promote partnership and coordination among the state's forces, allied militias, military companies, local and regional authorities, and the international community. However, the relationships among the Somali actors—especially between the SFG and Puntland, Ahlu

Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), the Ras Kamboni Brigade (RKB), and other clan militias—are rife with suspicion and tension. All of these groups conduct operations against Al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based unit of the al-Qaeda militant group seeking to create an Islamic state, independently of each other, but with the backing of AMISOM. In addition, the loyalty of individual members of the Somali National Army (SNA) to their own clan has resulted in clashes between the SNA and rival militias. Regional governors and District Commissioners (DC), including Mogadishu, also rely on the use of militias as the primary security apparatus.

Thus far, efforts to integrate allied militiamen into the SNA have been feckless due to mistrust among the communities and their respective militias. For instance, ASWJ reached an agreement to integrate its militia into the SNA in December 2012; however, only 25% of its militiamen have availed themselves for registration after one year.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Jubaland Interim Administration (JIA) agreed to integrate the RKB and other clan militias into the SNA on August 27, 2013.<sup>3</sup> In August 2013, the SFG, European Union (EU) and other international donors approved a new compact for the country, wherein security is considered one of the five pillars of peace- and state-building.<sup>4</sup> According to the security component of the compact,<sup>5</sup> allied militias are supposed to integrate into the SNA, thereby establishing a unified security institution.

Furthermore, the TFG adopted a legal pluralism that recognizes Islamic Sharia law, the



traditional law of the Xeer (which is applicable in all areas of the country), and secular law.

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Most Somalis resort to traditional remedies and clan elders for justice. Research shows that more than 80% of cases—including murder—are handled and resolved through non-state mechanisms.<sup>6</sup> Though Xeer mainly applies to property disputes and personal conflicts, the elders overstep their bounds in handling cases of property and personal matters. Elders can abort murder cases under police investigation, if the conflicting parties resolve the matter through their intervention. Despite their supportive role, it is evident that the elders' influence crosses into the police and other institutions' official jurisdiction. Interestingly, however, the provisional constitution<sup>7</sup> and the compact do not mention customary means of justice.

At present, there is an inclination to fully integrate and utilize the existing traditional system for the provision of security to the general population. This is the case because making effective security services accessible to the public, especially the pastoralist community, is exceedingly difficult. The relationship between the regional authorities and the SFG is tenuous and characterized by power struggles. Clan divisions, particularly at the national and

sub-national levels, have also compromised the peace- and state-building processes and undermined the formation of a unified security force. The clash among the clans in 1991 sowed animosity and requires a formal reconciliation mechanism. After removing Al-Shabaab from strategic locations in Mogadishu and Kismayo, its members have been using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), targeted assassinations, and they have imposed a rigid version of Sharia law in the places still under their control. It has been noted that there are typically two terrorist attacks per week against civilians. The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Hudur in the Bakool Region in August 2013 and its immediate recapture by al-Shabaab illustrates the inability of the SFG to exercise sovereign control over its territories without foreign support.

In addition, due to a lack of coherence and coordination among domestic stakeholders and the international community, terrorism remains a major challenge in the precincts. Al-Shabaab controls a significant part of South Central Somalia. Similarly, other clan and religious militias control large stretches of the territory and some parts of Puntland. In some parts of South Central Somalia, following the removal of Al-Shabaab, political and resource-based conflicts erupted among clans, which paved the way for the formation of non-state armed groups seeking to protect their own clans and resources.<sup>8</sup> This also sustains the coexistence of state security and local non-state armed groups.



## THE EMERGENCE OF HYBRIDIZED SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN SOMALIA

International peace-building initiatives in post-war settings have been focused on a liberal concept of intervention, which emphasize restoring the state's monopoly on the use of force, democratization, and market liberalization. Yet the liberal framework for state authority, as a pillar of peace- and state-building in Africa, has failed to construct sustainable peace. This is due to internal opposition, spoilers, inflexibility, and a lack of policy clarity from the West regarding the role of non-state actors and the mechanisms in place. Despite the democratic deficit of the non-state security providers, they work to resolve conflicts, help maintain public order, and defend their communities from external threats. They are instrumental in shaping security governance on account of their accessibility and legitimacy, and are often considered the last resort for restitution and restorative justice. Hence, liberal frameworks should not be the sole prescription for peace-building. The notion of the local-liberal hybrid form of peace means that neither absolutely liberal nor local sovereignties can exist alone.<sup>9</sup> Building sustainable peace and stability will prove elusive in post-war African countries without hybridizing state and non-state security institutions.

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Hybridity can impact domestic institutions' ability to gain legitimacy.

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After the collapse of the Said Barre regime in 1991, the institutional arrangement that

defined the security relationship between the state and its citizens failed. As a result, liberal and illiberal norms influencing security governance became intertwined. Wulf conceptualized hybridity as an "oligopoly on the use of force,"<sup>10</sup> because the use of force is shared among different agencies. Theoretically, hybridity is a reflection of the broader problems associated with state formation, which may involve international and national actors, but ultimately, it is the outcome of an indigenous process. It often forges compromises between liberal and illiberal norms and institutions. Thus, hybridity is understood as "both a process and condition of interaction between actors and practices."<sup>11</sup> However, the process is complex, as actors are neither consistent nor homogenous.

The degree of hybridity over the peace-building continuum varies based upon the interaction of liberal and illiberal norms and institutions, ranging from the existence of Westphalian states (where the state monopolizes the use of force) to state capture by non-state actors. The interaction of diverse norms and institutions is in continuous motion and produces a dynamic equilibrium along the peace-building continuum. For instance, if the liberal approach and international community's influence become stronger than the local one, the liberal approach will predominate, but will not be the sole approach. However, in Somalia, the oligopoly functions in tandem with the existence of multiple security actors, creating a balance between the use of formal and informal, and legal and illegal, means to gain influence. Hybridity can impact domestic institutions' ability to gain legitimacy.



There are some success stories in terms of the incorporation of traditional values and other non-state frameworks into the peace- and state-building process, such as in Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. Rwanda also exhibits a remarkable achievement in the preservation of peace and order by employing neighborhood militias called “Local Defense Forces” that work closely with the police. Furthermore, Ethiopia incorporated traditional leaders into a consultative council of regional governments beyond the elected regional council.<sup>12</sup> In Somaliland, tribal practices and institutions are integrated into the peace-building process; for example, through the election of traditional elites from their respective clans into the SFG in 2012. The coexistence of these liberal and illiberal norms allows the international and local communities to work together to establish a legitimate political system, enabling the actors to facilitate peace- and state-building processes.

Due to Somalia’s distinct disposition regarding clan structures and political Islam, and in spite of the gains made by the TFG and the SFG, the state remains despairingly weak. It would not have been possible to build a state at the outset without the involvement of traditional authorities, i.e. clan elders, participating in state formation by nominating members of parliament. State authority and security sector reform programs—including the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups—have been compromised by accommodating non-state actors (such as warlords, militiamen, and leaders of extremist groups) in the state-building process. As a result, agreements among Somalis make no provision for the disarmament of non-state armed groups.

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The international community’s intervention seems to put primacy on counterterror and counterinsurgency operations, which is a combination of contradictory and complementary political dynamics.

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The hybridity of security sector governance in Somalia may take any of the following three dynamic forms. First, informal, traditional, and illiberal norms and practices may influence the functionality of formal democratic institutions, such as the case of the Afghani Jirgas and Shuras making decisions regarding the state. Second, traditional non-state actors may be formally integrated into formal state structures; the institutionalization of the Guurti [Council of Chiefs] as practiced in Somaliland and Bougainville. Third, liberal state institutions may be dominated by violent non-state actors and institutions where these actors may even be asked to join the government to ensure stability. In Somalia, warlords and commanders of clan and religious militias, including extremist groups, join the political discourse and may attain government posts. Moreover, clan elders nominate members of parliament, while the president of Somalia is elected through a mix of traditional and liberal systems.

The extent to which hybridity affects the short- and long-term prospects for peace and stability is a complex issue. In Somalia, the hybridization of security sector governance should be analyzed through an amalgam of political and counterterrorism lenses, as well as liberal and traditional modes of peace-building.



The degree of hybridity varies based on the ability of the international and national actors to provide convincing incentives and exercise coercive power over the local actors.<sup>13</sup> The resistance of the regional administrations and militias to integrate into the SNA also creates a space to negotiate with non-state security actors. However, there is no mechanism in place to coordinate the police, militias, and national army. The state security forces in Mogadishu and other areas are dominated mainly by local militias. Although police attempt to work with the local community, significant sections of the local community are loyal to the resident militia. At present, the hybridity of the security sector is characterized by weakness and suspicion.

### **THE ROLE OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

International interventions to strengthen the security sector have been dependent upon the political and security dynamics within Somalia. They are primarily designed to assist the state's monopoly on the use of force. Prior to 2004, international and regional support was funneled to warlords to fight extremists and terrorists. Kenya and Ethiopia attempted to advance their counterterrorism campaigns by supporting clan and religious militias (such as ASWJ and RKB) and establishing a buffer zone. Local resistance to these efforts and the contextualization of liberal peace-building has led to the hybridization of the security sector. The international community's intervention seems to put primacy on

counterterror and counterinsurgency operations, which is a combination of contradictory and complementary political dynamics. Nevertheless, the SFG is still too weak to consolidate its power and control its territory, despite support from the international community. This leads to the hybridization of the security sector, where local authorities and militias as well as traditional actors participate in the provision of security services.

The European Union (EU), African Union (AU), United Kingdom (UK), United States (US), certain Arab countries, and Turkey provide technical and financial support to the government with the intention of restoring state authority. The EU, through its Mogadishu-based mission (European Union Training Mission ), trains 3,000 members of the SNA. AMISOM and Turkey provide training to the Somali police. The US also supports the introduction of the "Mobile Courts Initiative" to make formal courts accessible to local communities in Mogadishu.<sup>14</sup> These actors' support for sub-national entities, due to the central government's incapacity, reveals the importance of coordination among external peace-building initiatives.

### **CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

After two decades without a central government and considerable violence in Somalia, peace-building and state-building are imperative to stabilize the country and maintain international security. Effective peace-building and state-building in Somalia requires



the coexistence and compromise of values and institutions within the continuum of these processes. Hence, the government of Somalia and the international community should take the following into consideration:

- Introduce a home-grown, bottom-up approach to peace-building and state-building initiatives with committed international support.
- Develop and implement an approach that gives ample opportunity to the local community to address their security challenges and solve conflicts through their own mechanisms. This necessitates the development of a framework that decentralizes security sector governance to local governments and integrates the traditional system into the security governance structure.
- Build a unified and cohesive Somali National Army and police through reconciliation of the diverse communities and armed groups. This is critical to peace-building and state-building. It is also important to localize the militias in their respective neighborhoods under the umbrella of the local police to consolidate peace and state power, instead of integrating them into Somali National Army.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 UNSC. (2007). UNSC Resolution No.2073/2007. New York, United Nations
- 2 Abde Moalim (September 12, 2013) Somalia Revives Army Division in Step towards Greater Security, retrieved from [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/features/2013/09/12/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/features/2013/09/12/feature-01) on October 30, 2013.
- 3 IGAD, Addis Ababa. Communique on Agreement Between the Federal Government of Somalia and Jubbaland Delegation, August 27, 2013.
- 4 The five pillars of the Somalia New Deal Compact are building inclusive politics, security, justice, the country's economic foundations, revenue collection and the provision of services.
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- 7 Federal Republic of Somalia Provisional Constitution, which was adopted on August 1, 2012 in Mogadishu and approved by an assembly of representative from each clan, every region in Somalia.
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- 14 An interview conducted with the Somalia Desk Officer of the State Department, United States, on October 5, 2013.

Photo Credit on page 1:  
AMISOM efforts in Somalia  
Albany Associates. AU-UN IST PHOTO / TOBIN JONES.317  
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