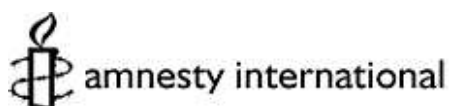


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Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 - Somalia

Head of state of Transitional Federal Government: **Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed**

Head of government of Transitional Federal Government: **Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo (replaced Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke in November)**

Head of Somaliland Republic: **Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud Silanyo (replaced Dahir Riyale Kahin in July)**

Death penalty: **retentionist**

Population: **9.4 million**

Life expectancy: **50.4 years**

Under-5 mortality (m/f): **186/174 per 1,000**

Armed conflict between armed Islamist groups and pro-government forces continued in southern and central Somalia. Thousands of civilians were killed or injured as a result of indiscriminate attacks and generalized violence, and at least 300,000 were displaced during the year. Access by aid agencies to civilians and the displaced was further restricted by armed groups and insecurity. Humanitarian workers, journalists and human rights activists remained at risk of killings and abductions. Armed groups controlled most of southern and central Somalia and they increasingly carried out unlawful killings, torture and forced recruitment. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) controlled only part of the capital Mogadishu and there was no effective justice system. Serious human rights abuses, including war crimes, remained unpunished. In semi-autonomous Puntland, there were clashes with an armed group. In Somaliland, a new government was appointed following presidential elections.

Background

The TFG struggled to extend control over Mogadishu, faced with persistent attacks by the armed Islamist groups al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, and internal divisions. On 15 March, the TFG signed a framework agreement with Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa (ASWJ), a Sufi armed group, formalizing a military alliance and recognizing the group's control of parts of central Somalia. However, an ASWJ faction later denounced the TFG's failure to implement the agreement. In

May, tensions surfaced between the TFG President and the Prime Minister, who resigned in September. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo became the new TFG Prime Minister on 1 November. Consultations over a draft constitution started in July.

Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for suicide attacks, including at the Muna hotel in Mogadishu in August, which killed 33 people. The armed group also claimed responsibility for bombings in Kampala, Uganda in July (see Uganda entry), saying they were in revenge for civilian casualties caused by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

AMISOM, mandated to protect TFG institutions, increased its troops, composed of Ugandan and Burundian soldiers, to 8,000, partly in response to the Kampala bombings. AMISOM denied accusations that they responded to armed groups' attacks in Mogadishu with indiscriminate shelling and shooting, resulting in civilian deaths. However, AMISOM apologized for the killing of two civilians on 23 November in Mogadishu, saying it had opened an investigation and had arrested soldiers involved in the incident. On 22 December, the UN Security Council extended AMISOM's authorized troop strength from 8,000 to 12,000.

International support for TFG security forces continued, despite concerns about their lack of accountability. In May, the EU started training 1,000 TFG soldiers in Uganda. The UN Monitoring Group highlighted continuous violations of the arms embargo on Somalia. In April, the UN Security Council imposed a travel ban, an assets freeze and a targeted arms embargo against nine individuals and entities in relation to Somalia.

In August, the new UN Special Representative for Somalia announced that the UN presence in Somalia would increase. The human rights situation was raised in reports by the UN Secretary-General, the UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and in a special session on Somalia at the UN Human Rights Council in September. However, despite continuing calls for an end to impunity for crimes under international law, no mechanism to investigate such crimes was established by the end of the year.

The international community co-ordinated further military responses and explored legal options to address piracy off Somalia's coast, as hijacking of ships and kidnapping of maritime crews expanded in the Indian Ocean. The Puntland government reportedly approved an anti-terrorism law in July.

Indiscriminate attacks

All parties to the conflict continued to use mortars and heavy weapons in areas populated or frequented by civilians, killing and injuring thousands of people. In Mogadishu, armed groups launched attacks from residential areas, and AMISOM and the TFG reportedly fired indiscriminately in response. From 4 January to 19 November, two hospitals in Mogadishu received 4,030 war-related casualties, 18 per cent of them children under five. Medical records from another hospital in Mogadishu between January and June showed that almost half of its patients were suffering war-related injuries and of these, 38 per cent were women and children under 14.

- On 29 January, as a result of fighting between armed groups and the TFG and AMISOM, 19 civilians were killed and more than 100 injured. One hospital in Mogadishu supported by Médecins Sans Frontières admitted 89 people injured by shelling between 29 January and 2 February, including 52 women and children.
- In July, some 170 people were killed and 700 injured by fighting in Mogadishu, according to ambulance services. Between 18 and 21 July, more than 50 people were reportedly killed, including 10 children, and dozens more injured by shelling between armed Islamist groups and TFG and AMISOM troops in districts of Mogadishu such as Hamar Weyne and Bakara market.

- An offensive launched during Ramadan by al-Shabab against the TFG and AMISOM triggered intense fighting in Mogadishu between late August and early September. Some 230 civilians were killed and another 400 wounded, according to the UN. On 24 August, two al-Shabab suicide bombers wearing government uniforms stormed the Muna hotel in TFG-controlled Mogadishu, killing at least 33 people, including hotel staff and guests, members of parliament and TFG security forces.

Displacement

Fighting, insecurity and poverty displaced some 300,000 people during the year. According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, 1.5 million Somalis were internally displaced in the country at the end of the year.

In January, fighting between al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam on the one hand, and Ahlu Sunna Waal Jamaa on the other, in the city of Dhusamareb in central Somalia and the city of Beletweyne in the Hiran region caused the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians.

In Mogadishu, some 23,000 people were displaced within two weeks as a result of the Ramadan offensive. Many joined settlements for displaced people along the Afgoye corridor outside Mogadishu, which hosted about 410,000 people with little or no access to humanitarian aid. From September onwards, thousands of displaced people in Afgoye were reported to have been forcibly evicted following acquisition of land by businessmen.

On 19 and 20 July, the Puntland authorities forcibly removed some 900 internally displaced people mainly from southern and central Somalia to the Galgadud region.

Civilians continued to flee to neighbouring countries. Despite the risks related to conflict and violence, Somalis were deported back to southern and central Somalia by Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and European countries, including the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. In October, fighting between pro-TFG forces and al-Shabab in Belet Hawo, on the border with Kenya, displaced some 60,000 people. Between 1 and 2 November, 8,000 civilians who had fled into Kenya near the town of Mandera were ordered to return to Somalia by the Kenyan authorities. On 4 November, Kenyan police moved them further inside Somalia.

Restrictions on humanitarian aid

Some 2 million people were in need of humanitarian support by the end of 2010 because of armed conflict and displacement, despite good harvests during the year. Humanitarian operations were impeded by fighting and insecurity, killings and abductions of humanitarian workers and restrictions on aid agencies' access to populations in need. At least two humanitarian workers were killed. In March, the UN Monitoring Group on the arms embargo on Somalia stated that a large part of World Food Programme (WFP) aid to Somalia was diverted to contractors and armed groups. The UN Security Council requested the UN humanitarian co-ordinator for Somalia to report to it every 120 days.

- In January, WFP suspended its work in southern Somalia due to insecurity and growing threats by armed groups. On 28 February, al-Shabab announced that it was banning WFP from areas under its control, claiming that food distribution undermined local farmers and that WFP had a political agenda. The ban, which remained in place at the end of the year, threatened up to one million people in need of food aid in southern Somalia, despite good rains and harvests in some regions.
- On 15 January, Nur Hassan Bare "Boolis", a security staff member of SAACID, an aid organization running a feeding programme in Mogadishu, and four other men were abducted by al-Shabab. He was found dead the next day with his hands bound. The other men were released days later, including another SAACID employee who was reportedly tortured.

- On 29 June 2010, a shell hit Keysaney hospital in northern Mogadishu, killing a patient; two more shells hit the same hospital in the following days, despite the ICRC urging parties to the conflict to spare medical facilities.
- In August, al-Shabab banned three humanitarian organizations from areas under its control, claiming that they were spreading Christianity. In September, it banned three more aid organizations, accusing them of links with the USA.

Freedom of expression – journalists and civil society

Intimidation of Somali journalists and civil society organizations by armed groups continued. The threat of killings and abductions forced more Somali activists to flee the country. Armed groups also closed or took over radio stations and banned certain topics from being reported. At least three journalists were killed during the year. Foreign observers only visited AMISOM bases in Mogadishu in southern Somalia. In Puntland, the government restricted media reports on its conflict with a local militia.

- On 21 February, Ali Yusuf Adan, a correspondent for the media outlet Somaliweyn, was captured by al-Shabab in the city of Wanleweyn, apparently after a report alleging the group had killed a man in the area. He was freed unharmed on 2 March.
- On 4 May, journalist Nur Mohamed Abkey of Radio Mogadishu, a TFG-owned station, was abducted by gunmen in southern Mogadishu and shot in the head. His body was dumped in an alleyway and reportedly bore traces of torture. His Radio Mogadishu colleagues received a phone call from alleged al-Shabab members claiming responsibility for the killing.
- On 3 April, the armed group Hizbul Islam ordered radio stations to stop broadcasting music within 10 days, claiming it was un-Islamic. On 9 April, al-Shabab banned the BBC and Voice of America from broadcasting in areas under its control. They also seized the BBC's satellite dishes and FM transmitters.
- On 13 August, Abdifatah Jama, deputy director of the radio station Horseed FM, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on charges related to an interview with Sheikh Mohamed Said Atom, leader of an armed group in Puntland. He was tried and convicted the day after his arrest, reportedly under Puntland's new anti-terror legislation. Puntland's Information Minister then threatened journalists with punishment should they interview Sheikh Mohamed Said Atom's forces. Abdifatah Jama appealed against his conviction and was pardoned by the Puntland President and released in November.

Child soldiers

Armed Islamist groups, in particular al-Shabab, increased their forced recruitment of boys as young as nine years old, alongside young men, into their forces. Girls were sometimes reportedly recruited to cook and clean for al-Shabab forces or forced to marry al-Shabab members.

In June, the TFG President ordered the Army Chief to investigate media reports that child soldiers were used in TFG forces. The findings of the investigation were not made available by the end of the year. In November, the new TFG Prime Minister pledged to the UN Special Representative on children and armed conflict to work towards an action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Abuses by armed groups

Armed Islamist groups continued to unlawfully kill and torture people they accused of spying or not conforming to their own interpretation of Islamic law. They killed people in public, including

by stoning them to death, and carried out amputations and floggings. They also imposed restrictive dress codes, flogging women who did not wear the hijab and forcing men to wear trousers no longer than the ankle.

- In January, a man accused of rape was reportedly stoned to death by members of al-Shabab in the city of Barawe, Lower Shabelle.
- In April, the bodies of five beheaded men were found in Mogadishu. It was alleged that al-Shabab had beheaded them because they were involved in building a new Parliament.
- Two men reportedly had their hands amputated by members of al-Shabab in July in the town of Balad, north of Mogadishu, on accusations of theft.
- On 27 October, two young women were reportedly shot dead by al-Shabab members in a public killing in Beletweyne. They were reportedly accused of spying. The town had recently been the scene of fighting between al-Shabab and pro-TFG forces.

Somaliland

Presidential elections were held on 26 June in the Republic of Somaliland. Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud Silanyo, a former opposition politician, was declared the new President in July. According to independent observers, the elections were generally free, fair and peaceful. However, media freedom organizations reported some instances of restrictions on journalists in the lead-up to the elections.

Tensions flared in the border areas of Sool and Sanaag claimed by Puntland. A new armed group clashed with Somaliland security forces from May onwards. Thousands of people were reportedly displaced by the clashes.

Displaced people from southern and central Somalia continued to live in difficult conditions.

Minority groups continued to suffer discrimination.

- In September, two women from a Gaboye minority clan who had been acquitted by a court in Aynabo, Saraar region, were attacked by local people and kept in prison for their own protection. They were also allegedly attacked by prison inmates. They were subsequently released.

Death penalty

In December, the TFG carried out its first execution since 2007. In Puntland, at least six people were sentenced to death and at least seven were reportedly executed. In Somaliland, two people were reportedly sentenced to death.

- On 7 December, Nur Ahmed Shire was executed by TFG forces in the district of Hamar Weyne in Mogadishu. A former TFG soldier, he had reportedly been convicted of killing another TFG soldier.