

# Governance and Economic Survival in Post-Intervention Somalia<sup>1</sup>

■ *Ken Menkhaus and John Prendergast*

*The international community, the United Nations, governments and donor agencies have traditionally viewed Somalia's localised or clan politics as anarchic, and therefore as an obstacle to long-term peaceful and sustainable development. This article sets out the challenges and opportunities facing them in working within rather than against Somalia's "stateless" political reality. In choosing to work with local structures it is essential that the legitimacy of various types of structures is evaluated based on clear criteria such as their local support, performance and adherence to principles of "good government". The authors argue that the future role for aid and diplomacy should centre around engaging with local structures, and supporting Somali initiatives to rebuild their country from the ground up.*

## Introduction

**I**n the aftermath of the March 1995 termination of international intervention in Somalia, the most significant and complex feature of the Somali political landscape is the radical localisation of its politics. Although the country's localised polities are usually viewed as a political crisis ("anarchy") to be

resolved through the revival of a central state, it can also be argued that the localised polities now evolving (1) represent a significant social adaptation to the prolonged collapse of the Somali state, (2) perform some of the most essential functions of governance within their communities, (3) are viewed as legitimate authorities in their neighbourhoods or villages, of which they are an integral part, and (4) will likely remain the only meaningful polities in the territory of Somalia for some time to come.

The challenge to the international community – governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multilateral donors, states, and the United Nations (UN) – is to attempt to work with this “stateless” political reality rather than against it. This constitutes a challenge not only because international organisations and states are accustomed to dealing with and through states (indeed, some multilaterals refuse or are unable to deal with Somalia at all until a recognised central state is reestablished), but because these radically localised polities are fluid in structure and authority, overlapping, and situational in nature.

Although it would be unfeasible and unwise to treat these polities as though they were conventional governments, it is also inappropriate to interact with them as though they were little more than “local NGOs”. The legitimacy of these polities should be judged on the basis of their local support, performance, and adherence to standard norms of “good government” (including respect for human rights), not on the cognitive and bureaucratic needs of foreign donors. Donors will need to develop flexible and creative new ground-rules for working with sub-national polities in collapsed states like Somalia.

## **The persistence of state collapse**

Most analyses of the prolonged collapse of the state in Somalia focus on flawed political leadership as the cause of Somalia’s woes. Blame falls on the divisive tactics of former leader Siyad Barre, who left a legacy of deep clan animosity; on factional leaders in Somalia, who, in their quest to replace Barre, fuel clan animosities and who are seen as the main obstacle to national reconciliation; and on diplomats in the international community (particularly the UN) for pursuing inappropriate diplomatic strategies in premature efforts to revive a central state.

Although myopic leadership both within and outside of

Somalia has unquestionably contributed to that country's problems, more important are the underlying structural impediments to the resuscitation of central authority. Simply stated, centrifugal forces – political, economic, and social – currently outweigh centralising ones in contemporary Somalia.

Economically, there was never in Somalia's history a sustainable material basis for a viable central state authority. In the past, the Somali state was funded almost entirely by Cold War-driven foreign aid, leading to a bloated and artificial structure which collapsed soon after that aid was frozen in the late 1980s.<sup>2</sup> There are no prospects for such large quantities of foreign aid for Somalia in the post-Cold War, post-UNOSOM era, which means that a central Somali state will have to subsist primarily on resources extracted through taxes and modest amounts of foreign assistance. This script is unfeasible. Somalis have little surplus capital or formal market activity to tax, and while they are often willing to contribute taxes at the local level, where immediate results are visible and where authorities are accountable, they will fiercely resist national-level taxation.

Socially, the centrifugal power of clan politics overwhelms efforts to re-unite Somalis. Lineage-based alliances are notoriously prone to fissure, and are extremely unstable, as those who have attempted or witnessed attempts to cobble together broad coalitions are well aware. Moreover, each clan has vastly inflated notions of its relative demographic and political importance, claiming a much greater portion of the "national cake" than can be accommodated in the zero-sum world of political representation. The fact that the "national cake" has shrunk dramatically only exacerbates these tensions.

Politically, powerful vested interests continue to benefit from statelessness and block movements towards national reconciliation. These interests include those who profit from an economy of plunder, mafia-like extortion rackets, and various other unlawful economic dealings; militia leaders ("warlords") whose power base rests on conquest, mobilisation and fear; the *mooryaan*, young armed men whose status and wealth would be dramatically reduced in a civil society under the rule of law; and entire clans which have benefitted from the occupation of new and valuable real estate in Mogadishu and the river valleys, and who would stand to lose considerably in a peace which might involve the return of stolen property.

By contrast, centripetal forces in Somalia are weaker, though not inconsequential. They include, (1) the Somali political class – former civil servants, high-ranking military officials, and ministers

– whose often lucrative Siad Barre era livelihood was within the state apparatus. This class of politically active individuals continues to operate on the belief that national reconciliation will enable them to re-establish a state structure that afforded them all the economic opportunities of the past. They seem not yet to have realised that, with far less foreign aid pouring into the state coffers, positions in a minimalist state will be much less attractive than those in the Barre regime. (2) Certain faction leaders, those who calculate they may be able to win control over a central state, struggle against the centrifugal forces that divide their constituencies and challenge their authority. (3) A growing number of Somali entrepreneurs are perceiving that their business interests could benefit from the emergence of some recognised authority, albeit one coexisting with rather than challenging the mafia-based economy from which these merchants profit. The need to reduce insecurity and uncertainty, and to keep major roadways and ports open for commerce, has driven merchants to support a “Peace Committee”, aimed at establishing multi-clan control over the seaport and airport. This is envisaged as a first step to establishing a regional authority. (4) There is the international community, especially the donor community and the UN. Their state-centric diplomacy and the future potential for aid to or through a national government are invariably two of the most important centralising political forces in Somalia. Their influence may not survive to overcome the structural barriers to central governance.

## **Political factions and alliances**

The centrifugal forces outlined above have taken their toll on the Somali factions, which the UN had hoped would produce a cross-clan alliance capable of holding together a transitional national authority. Throughout much of 1994, the UN sought out factions and factional leaders who appeared to be politically ascendent, in order to assist them to form the backbone of a national government. The most prominent of these UN efforts was the attempt, through numerous peace conferences and informal talks, to broker an axis between Generals Morgan and Aideed and Col. Abdullahi Yusuf, whom UNOSOM felt could provide the military backbone for a state stretching from Kismayo through Mogadishu to the central region. The UN’s subsequent frustration and failure was due in large part to the fact that none of the political factions, including the Somali

National Alliance headed by General Aideed, was sufficiently broad-based and authoritative to implement accords of national reconciliation. Instead, all of the factions faced serious erosion in their power bases, a trend that only worsened as UNOSOM finalised its withdrawal, depriving the Mogadishu-based factions of millions of dollars in contracts that had shored up their patronage system through 1993 and 1994.

Currently, the factions are in a state of political crisis, so riven by internal divisions as to be politically dysfunctional and/or so weak as to have become, for all practical purposes, fictitious. These include the Somali Patriotic Movement/Somali National Alliance (SPM/Sna), the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM); the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/Sna); and the United Somali Congress (USC).<sup>3</sup>

## The shift to localised polities

The gradual demise of factional politics in Somalis does not, however, indicate that Somalia is in a state of anarchy. On the contrary, at the local level – in urban neighbourhoods, agricultural villages, and pastoral ranges – there exist dynamic and diverse “polities”. Local communities have adapted to the prolonged collapse of the state by developing and in some cases rediscovering a variety of informal systems and mechanisms that, to varying degrees, provide minimal functions of day-to-day governance. Most are fragile and of limited effectiveness, and some (the more zealous of the Islamic courts) are reprehensible in their practices – but this mosaic of localised polities is and will remain the defining feature of the political landscape for some time to come.

It is impossible to make sweeping generalisations about the legitimacy and effectiveness of particular social categories – elders, faction leaders, intellectuals, clerics, district council members, businessmen, militiamen, former civil servants, women’s groups, local NGOs. Such legitimacy is fluid, varying from one place to the next; prone to change overtime; and dependent on the type of authority one is seeking. For example, clan elders are almost always central players in clan reconciliation and conflict mediation, but they may not be the most effective or appropriate actors for managing and overseeing a demobilisation programme. District councils which have survived the departure of UNOSOM may not be strong enough to serve as local decision-makers in the allocation of scarce

resources, but may be an effective implementing body for decisions made by elders.

A practical example of these polities is provided by the Medina neighbourhood in Mogadishu, where several security and judicial systems overlap. One way that neighbours living within a few blocks of each other maintain security is through use of a neighbourhood watch system. If armed outsiders are seen in the area or a crime is occurring, whistles are blown by residents. Because nearly every household is armed, this system can quickly form a lethal local posse, and is quite an effective deterrent to crime. Along with payments to armed youths and others, these radically privatised, quasi-vigilante security arrangements provide reasonable deterrents to crime – for those who can afford them, and who hail from sub-clans with adequate power to reinforce the deterrent factor. Indeed, for those Somalis possessing valuable commercial property, the best insurance against theft is the certainty that their own clansmen will exact revenge on any other clan that attempts to steal their property. However imperfect this security system may be, it is and will remain far superior to any police force.

Also, a time-honoured practice of elders mediating and arbitrating disputes served as the primary “judicial” system even before the collapse of the Somali state. Thus the disintegration of formal state governance has had relatively little impact on the ability of the Medina community to adjudicate.

Since the outbreak of the civil war, and now again with the withdrawal of the UNOSOM forces, a new system of policing and judging crimes – the Islamic courts – is emerging in Medina and elsewhere. Empowered by well-armed and well-disciplined young men, fundamentalist mosques have effectively maintained the peace in some neighbourhoods by imposing shariah law on offenders. Now these fundamentalists are spreading their reach throughout neighbourhoods in Medina and north Mogadishu. It is unclear precisely how their jurisdiction affects other (secular) systems of policing and dispute settlement, but it is reasonable to assume that their simultaneous operation is triggering tensions in the community.

## **Prospects for renewed conflict**

Although the concern expressed by some international observers that the UNOSOM forces' departure will trigger widespread and sustained civil war in Somalia are exaggerated (militias were

never prevented from moving against each other in the last eighteen months of the UNOSOM presence), there are and will continue to be a number of flash points for armed conflict. Most post-UNOSOM political conflicts are taking place within clans and communities, not between the major clans and factions, and are usually non-violent. Nearly all of the political energies of Somali leaders are spent in a perpetual struggle to consolidate power internally against a wide range of challengers that includes not only rival political and militia leaders within their clan, but also the representatives of civil society – the elders, intellectuals, businessmen, clerics, and so on – whose claims on political authority are often at odds with one another. While these internal power struggles rarely erupt in violence, and hence attract less international attention, they are in many respects much more significant than the periodic flare-up of inter-factional clashes.

Any armed conflict which is likely to occur in the post-UNOSOM period will probably follow the pattern that has emerged in the past 18 months. Armed conflict is most likely to occur in territory newly “occupied” by outsiders (Lower Jubba; Lower Shebelle; Mogadishu); the conflict will tend to involve competing “occupiers” rather than long-time residents; and armed conflict will be relatively short-lived and will not widen into heavy, protracted fighting. In these contested zones, (which tend to possess a relatively high economic value), property and commercial rights tend to be in a greater state of upheaval, more prone to dispute, and more likely to be resolved through recourse to arms than through negotiation. Local elders, who normally would be instrumental in mediating disputes before they flared into armed communal conflict, are often impotent in dealing with grievances involving young militiamen from outside their clan and region.

Some particularly dangerous and unresolved conflicts currently obtain in Lower Shebelle, Lower Juba and Mogadishu. In *Lower Shebelle* conflicts over control of lucrative plantation land, the export of bananas, and the port of Merka have already spilled over into armed conflict between the Habr Gedr and the Hawadle clans in 1994 (with the Hawadle losing) as well as the local Biimaal clan of Merka and the Habr Gedr (with the Biimaal clan eventually losing). In the past several months, competition involving two rival banana exporting companies (the old Italo-Somali Somalfruit Company, and the new competitor Dole) has led to serious divisions within the Habr Gedr clan, and to armed conflicts between the militias of the two companies. This

underlying competition to control valuable agricultural production in a militarily occupied zone will remain potentially explosive.

In *Lower Jubba*, the Jilib area has been heavily contested by numerous clans, and has produced many small-scale armed incidents. It remains an uneasy fault line between the Ogadeni clan, the Habr Gedr militia, and numerous other smaller militias, including the Biimaal, Hawadle, Gaaljaal, and Sheekal clans.

In *Mogadishu*, aside from unresolved tensions between the Abgal and Murosade clans, and contention over control of the seaport, there is also the possibility that the growing rift between Osman Ato and General Aideed could spark intra Habr Gedr fighting, thus pitting against each other two of the best equipped militias in the country. This could easily spread to the Lower Shebelle and central regions and might draw in other clan militias. Although it is unlikely that the current political conflict would deteriorate to such an extent, it is a worrisome worst case scenario.

## What are the prospects for peace?

In Mogadishu, the establishment of the "Peace Committee" for joint management of the port and airport (the port is already being successfully managed through this arrangement), and efforts to form a viable Benadir Regional Authority, have been touted as the most promising signs that key Mogadishu political and commercial interests are shifting towards a perception that peace and a stable regional authority will help achieve their long-term goals.

According to recent reports, the Peace Committee and the proposed Benadir Regional Authority involve discussions between a powerful set of Hawiye political figures.

Although it is too early to predict whether their initiative will be fruitful, it clearly challenges the power base of both Aideed and Ali Mahdi. The politico-commercial interests involved in the Peace Committee were not always so "enlightened".

As previously described, during the civil war and famine the merchant class and political aspirants in Mogadishu and elsewhere found enormous profits in the economy of plunder. Although hiring their own private armies for security was expensive, this cost of doing business was more than compensated by the absence of taxes to pay or laws to obey. It is worth recalling that the man who now spearheads efforts to



forge a “pax commercial” in Mogadishu, Osman Ato among other things diverted millions of dollars of food relief intended for famine victims, and is alleged to have taken over state farms in the lower Jubba to grow and export marijuana. The fact that entrepreneurs like Osman Ato seemingly perceive their longer-term interests to be served by more predictable and secure authority over commercial arteries does not represent a sudden conversion from “warlord” to “peacelord”. Rather, it serves to remind us that, like law-abiding citizens, mafias prefer routinised and predictable patterns of activity. For political and commercial barons, the “deal” they are trying to strike on the transport links and on regional authority is not intended to re-establish conventional “law and order” (which would land some of them in prison for their activities) but to minimise expensive and unnecessary turf battles that might scare away foreign donors and thus endanger the development aid they perceive as the ultimate prize. Thus, while the work of the Peace Committee in Mogadishu should be welcomed by the international community, it should also be seen for what it is.

Aside from these moral uncertainties, there are also practical concerns. Can the initiative succeed, not only in bringing reconciliation and governance to Mogadishu, but also in promoting reconciliation and state-building nationally? Many local and international observers have long assumed that the Somali crisis is essentially a Mogadishu crisis and that national reconciliation would be relatively easy if the conflict in the capital is resolved. There are however, potential problems with this assumption: (1) In Mogadishu, the Peace Committee is perceived as primarily a Habr Gedr-Abgal arrangement. Unless other Hawiye clans, especially the Murosade and Hawadle clans, feel adequately represented in the process they may try to disrupt it (2) Even if the process is broadened to include other Hawiye clans, the Committee would continue to exclude non-Hawiye clans many of which will complain that the capital cannot be politically controlled by any one clan; that the proceeds from activity at the seaport and airport should be national revenues, not profits to be cornered by a single clan, and that the Hawiye initiatives are therefore invalid. This complaint will spill over into armed conflict if the parties to the Benadir Regional Authority attempt to lay claims to national government in Somalia and attract international recognition or aid. (3) If the Peace Committee marginalises Aideed, it risks facing a desperate backlash by the weakened warlord, which could disrupt the fragile alliance on which the Committee is built.

## The economic dimension

Two broad trends are visible in the Somali economy. (1) In contrast to the localisation of Somali politics the economy is increasingly internationalised through remittances, trade, investment, and export of labour. (2) There is a sharp and disturbing contrast between the relative robustness of the rural sectors and the urban economy, which is non-productive, predatory, and artificial – a dysfunctional legacy of decades of dependence on the revenues of a foreign-aid supported central state.

### Internationalisation

Brisk commercial activities throughout the country are facilitated by concerted efforts on the part of elders, merchants, and militias to keep open commercial routes and ensure at least minimal maintenance of the commercial infrastructure. Trade across the Ethiopian and Kenyan borders is active; the ports are bustling.

Somalia's principal export remains livestock which has traditionally provided the bulk of foreign exchange and employment. Current anecdotal evidence compares favourably with pre-war data, suggesting that the livestock sector quickly rebounded from serious losses during the recent years of war and famine. Somalia's other main export, bananas, has also fully rebounded from the disruption of the war. In fact Somalia has actually exceeded its Lomé Convention quota of banana exports to the European Union.

Unlike livestock exports, which provide broad financial benefit to individual pastoral households, profits from banana exports are monopolised by a small group of mostly Habr Gedr militias and the foreign companies with which they do business. Banana production is taking place on land that has been militarily overrun and occupied by the SNA, and proceeds from exports are helping to finance the purchase of weapons by the militias. Thus this export activity does not benefit the overall economy and should not be supported or encouraged by international donors or diplomats unless land claims in the Lower Shebelle are resolved, and it becomes evident that export earnings are no longer fueling arms acquisitions or armed conflict.

Other foreign corporations are seeking business and profits in Somalia. Conoco continues to survey the northeast region for oil and natural gas reserves. The absence of central government combined with tempting offers by militia leaders desperate for financial resources, will probably continue to attract predatory

and unscrupulous international players such as the firm that paid a local faction leader for permission to dump toxic waste in the Somali desert in 1992.

Meanwhile, exports continue to be outpaced by imports fuelled by residual UNOSOM funds as well as sizable remittances from Somalis abroad. Weaponry and drugs as well as Indian cloth, gold and other items arrive at ports and across borders. Because so much of the urban demand for imports depends on remittances, this is a somewhat precarious and possibly unsustainable pattern of consumption.

### **Rural sectors**

In addition to the healthy resurgence of the pastoral sector, reflected in Somalia's renewed exportation of livestock, the agricultural sector performed surprisingly well in 1994, with crop production reaching average pre-war levels. Indeed, the sorghum harvest is estimated by the FAO as double the average pre-war production. Because sorghum is a low-value crop that is rarely consumed by urbanites and never exported, it is much less likely to be looted from small farmers. The high level of sorghum production is partly attributable to good rainfall, but may also reflect a successful survival strategy by smallholders. In short the rural sector appears to be fully self-reliant again. This cannot, however, be said of the urban economy, especially in Mogadishu.

### **The dysfunctional urban economy**

The departure of UNOSOM has already had a significant economic impact in Mogadishu. Formal sector employment collapsed in one fell swoop, as the UN was the principal employer in town, creating thousands of jobs directly and thousands more indirectly through the generation of services for those with UN jobs. The artificial, externally driven economy created in Mogadishu fuelled an accelerated pattern of urbanisation that has left in its wake a huge number of unemployed young people with no chance of obtaining a productive livelihood in their present location.

Adding to the economic pressure are moves by several countries, including Kenya to repatriate Somali refugees. Canada and some European countries are also actively exploring repatriation options. Such moves would severely reduce the remittance base.

After a brief mini-boom driven by exports from the last of the looted UNOSOM equipment and infrastructure from the US Embassy and elsewhere, the economy will be in for a rough ride

as it undergoes “withdrawal” from its foreign aid dependency. The value of the Somali shilling deteriorated over the final months of UNOSOM’s presence, which drove up the price of imported food in major markets. Thus the underemployed, volatile population in Mogadishu face major economic problems. Thanks in large part to UNOSOM, the city’s population is also heavily armed. The faction leaders – especially Aideed – greatly benefitted from rents, security contracts, employment, currency transactions and a variety of other fringe benefits courtesy of the UNOSOM cash cow. One Somali elder remarked, “UNOSOM came to save us from the warlords; and ended up aligning with them.”

## The future role of aid and diplomacy

How can the international community deal with this seeming dichotomy between political localisation and economic internationalisation? The key could be in realising that the two forces actually may not be at odds. The failure of the UN mission in Somalia was to a large degree the extension of a bankrupt donor policy which for decades supported overly centralised, unsustainable government structures in Mogadishu whose legitimacy came primarily from the barrel of a gun. The UN and donor governments have spent the last two years obsessing over the re-creation of a centralised authority in Mogadishu. This greatly exacerbated the conflicts, as competing militias positioned themselves for the potential spoils of a new aid-dependent state. In the process, the vast majority of Somalis and their local institutions have been ignored and further marginalised.

It is critical to engage – flexibly, patiently and directly – the local authorities that are evolving in various communities and regions throughout the country. In some places, the fledgling district councils might be the appropriate medium; in others, more traditional structures of authority such as the clan councils formed by elders, sheikhs, or sultans seem to be gaining acceptance. In yet others, some local Somali organisations have demonstrated a commitment to their communities that can be built upon. In all cases, local communities should be challenged to leverage internationally provided resources with local inputs, such as labour, tax contributions, or other sources.

Gently and subtly, aid can reinforce good governance and respect for human rights through positive conditionality. Aid to local areas can be tied to such standards as accountability, reciprocity, basic public welfare mandates and respect for minority communities. SABC (Somali Aid Coordination Body) and its key constituent donors are seriously exploring alternative aid strategies that work with rather than against local polities.

Despite the rhetoric of neutrality surrounding aid, it often is one of the most important contributors to conflict. Any donor planning new aid must be cognisant of its political impact. Aid should go in small amounts to local communities striving together to rebuild their lives. Aid should be linked to reconciliation; no aid should go to a unilaterally declared government which excludes large segments of the population and involves only military factions. The reconstruction of legitimate authority has to happen on Somali time and in Somali ways, and must not be driven by any preference the international community may have for dealing with recognised national governments.

## **Some lessons from the 1991-92 debacle**

In terms of emergency preparedness, the 1991-92 debacle offers some lessons. The use of beach landings, small ports, and cross-border channels from Kenya and Ethiopia is critical in the decentralisation of disaster response necessary in the future. A great deal has been learned about the use of Somali merchants in moving food by monetising food aid; the trucks of merchants rarely get looted. (Monetisation strategies now focus on re-capitalising merchants, diversifying commodity markets, and keeping prices affordable for the consumer.) It is also clear that cheap sorghum stays in the domestic market even if looted, whereas more expensive commodities will be exported. In terms of monitoring the situation, the European Union has a plan to conduct nutrition and terms of trade surveys every three months, and the NGOs and UN agencies that remain will also provide regular surveillance data.

The Jubba Valley's rich resource base will continue to attract Somali and outside investors. Unregulated past exploitation and land grabbing displaced thousands of tillers. The resultant ventures, such as banana plantations, were profitable but their

gains were unevenly distributed. In 1977 the International Labour Organisation found that plantations held labour costs abysmally low to maximize profits – of which 75 percent were realised outside Somalia. Aid to the agricultural sector must be conditioned on a fair and thorough review of land ownership and rights. Under no conditions should donors and NGOs assist in major agricultural projects if land has been usurped by force from original owners. The international community has a special responsibility to safeguard the rights of minority agricultural communities, and not to legitimise the military occupation of land by outsiders.

One ultimate objective of any sustainable demobilisation programme is to get militia members and armed teens out of the cities and back to their home areas where they can engage in productive activities. Linking appropriate training with income generating schemes like food processing or other cottage industries may offer the best chance to lure young militia men back to productive livelihoods.

In the 1980s, Somalia's percentage of urbanisation overtook those of Kenya and Ethiopia. Policies that discriminated against rural areas and producers were the main culprit. Increased urbanisation makes food- and cash-for-work critical in mitigating famine in the short term. Providing incentives to reverse the rural-urban shift is an urgent long term need. Rural rehabilitation and recovery should be the primary objective of humanitarian interventions in Somalia, no matter where they lie on the relief-development continuum. Agencies must encourage restoration of rural communities' subsistence capabilities and give the re-creation of wealth-producing opportunities through ecologically sound agricultural and pastoral activities priority over urban-focused interventions that become magnets for the marginalised. All interventions should feed into and build on the local processes of consensual decision-making and the local capacities (organisation, energy, skills) of the communities assisted.

Improving access to credit makes sense as a means to reach the multitude of merchants and to promote indigenous entrepreneurship and the other benefits – increased commercial activity, secondary income sources for families, and greater opportunities for non-farm employment – of injecting capital into the already burgeoning post-famine informal sector. Women, who often have the highest repayment rates of any recipients, should be specifically targeted.

Foreign aid agencies operating in Somalia can dramatically

lower their costs by cutting back on expatriate employees and replacing them with local workers. Security costs are 20-30% of most agency budgets – a higher percentage than in Liberia or Angola perhaps the highest in the world. Many agencies are again using “technicals”, or at least hiring armed guards to protect agency vehicles and staff, especially in Mogadishu. One standard policy should be established for all humanitarian agencies by the donor-supported Somalia Aid Coordination Body regarding the hiring of local security, to ensure that legitimate security needs do not degenerate into hyper-extortionate arrangements. It is imperative that aid agencies not become (as they were during the war) a funding arm of an extortion- and militia-based economy.

## Conclusion

The likelihood is remote of a return to 1991-92, when drought combined with major cross-country military sweeps to completely decimate the resource base and kinship networks of Somalia's agrarian communities. Those circumstances are extremely unlikely to recur. Somalia may continue without a national government, but that does not mean there is no authority or structure extant and evolving at the regional and local level. Those local structures should be engaged patiently and given appropriate support, as Somalis try to rebuild their communities and country from the ground up.

1. This article was written in May 1995 before General Aideed announced the formation of a government and before his attack on Baidoa. It is reprinted with permission from *CSIS Africa Notes*, Issue no 172, May 1995, a monthly periodical published for subscribers in over 30 countries by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K Street NW, Washington DC 20006, USA.
2. See “What are the lessons to be learned from Somalia?” Ken Menkhaus and Terence Lyons, *CSIS Africa Notes* no. 144, January 1993 and “Some observations on Somalia's past and future”, Thomas J. Callahan, *CSIS Africa Notes* no. 158, March 1994
3. For more details see unabridged version of this paper, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Number 172, May 1995

