

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Somalia

Score:	2006	2007	Change			
Polity:	-77	-77	x			
Democ:	-77	-77	x			
Autoc:	-77	-77	x			
Durable:		0				
Tentative:		No				
SCODE	SOM	CCODE	520	Date of Report	1 November 2008	
Polity IV Component Variables						
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP	
-77	-77	-77	-77	-77	-77	
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)						
End Date			27 January 1991	Begin Date		
Polity Fragmentation: Yes, Somaliland and Puntland (40-60%)						
Constitution	The Transitional National Government formed in August 2000 had a three-year mandate to create a new constitution and hold elections, this goal was not achieved but the process is ongoing					
Executive(s)	Interim President Abdullahi Yusuf, head of Transitional Federal Government; elected by the interim parliament, 14 October 2004 Prime Minister Nur Hassan; appointed by the interim president, 24 November 2007					
Legislature	Unicameral: Interim National Assembly (275 members; 61 seats assigned to each of four major clans (Darod, Digil-Mirifle, Dir, and Hawiye), remaining 31 seats divided among minority clans)					
Judiciary	No judiciary					

Narrative Description:¹

Description of Interregnum: (-77)

There has been no effective central government in Somalia since its embattled ruler Mohamed Siad Barre, who had ruled the country since 1969, fled the country in 1991 at the height of inter-clan warfare.

A fragile democratic system was established in the Horn of Africa in 1960 when British Somaliland (north) and Italian Somaliland (south) unified into the independent state of Somalia. During the early independence years political parties in Somalia reflected the multitude of clan and regional interests that have long defined this society. While Somalia is one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in Africa, nevertheless, the society is deeply divided into numerous rival clans that go back many generations.

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While there are four main clan families in Somalia, political identification and authority tends to revolve around the multitude of sub-clans found in this society.

Democratic institutions were effectively dismantled in Somalia in 1969 when General Mohamed Siad Barre consolidated political authority within the military and established a one-party state based on the principles of “scientific socialism.” Despite Barre’s avowed intention to eliminate clan-based politics in Somalia, over the years his rule became increasingly dependent on the political support of his own Marehan clan (a sub-clan of the Darod clan-family). As the Marehan clan increased its influence in government at the expense of the northern Somali clans, clan-based insurgencies began to develop throughout the country during the 1980s. By 1989 massive government opposition to President Barre’s rule and widespread inter-clan rivalries limited central government authority to Mogadishu and its immediate environs. As the army dissolved into competing armed groups loyal to former commanders and clan leaders, Barre was forced to flee Mogadishu in early 1991. The country quickly disintegrated into anarchy as rival clans sought to fill the power vacuum caused by the breakdown of central political authority.

There are currently over 30 rival clans competing for political control in Somalia. The dominant politicized clans currently operating in Somalia include the United Somali Congress (Hawiye clan), the Somali Patriotic Movement (Darod clan), the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (Majertein clan), the Somali Democratic Alliance (Gadabursi clan), and the United Somali Front (Issa clan). Moreover, within each of these clan-based parties serious factional divisions exist between rival warlords. The politicization of these clans during the 1980s and early 1990s triggered the civil war and subsequent state failure of Somalia. Despite UN efforts in the early 1990s to establish order in this country, over 1,000,000 Somalians have died as a result of war, famine and disease during the 1990s. Between January 1991 and August 2000 Somalia had no central government. Instead, government in this country consisted of a variety of overlapping and fluid local authorities that included private militias, clan elders, and fundamentalist mosques.

In recent years some degree of central government authority has been reinstated in this country as 3,000 representatives of Somalia’s clans, civic and religious organizations and women’s groups met in Djibouti in the summer of 2000 to elect a Transitional National Government (TNG). The TNG had a mandate to prepare democratic elections to be held within three years. While the TNG made some gains in reestablishing government control over some issues and areas in Mogadishu, it continued to be met with significant resistance outside the capital city. The majority of the country’s warlords continued to reject the TNG and actively sought to undermine its effectiveness. Moreover, the two self-declared independent states in the north of the country – Somaliland and Puntland – continued to resist the authority of the TNG.

At a celebration of Somalia’s 41 years of independence in July 2001, Prime Minister Gallyaydh stated that his government would soon be able to claim control of the capital city. During the summer of 2001 uniformed police were dispatched in Mogadishu for the first time in ten years to patrol strategic junctions and tax officers were mandated with the authority to collect taxes from the city’s central markets. Moreover, the southern town of Kismayo became the first city in the country to set up a new administration supportive of the TNG. Despite these promising trends, Somalia’s future remained uncertain. Armed conflict between forces loyal to the country’s fragile new government and those loyal to Hussein Mohamed Aidid engulfed Mogadishu in May and October of 2001. Aidid was a key member of the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC), a grouping of southern Somali warlords organized in April 2001 to resist the expansion of central government control. The SRRC, backed by Ethiopia, stated that they would form their own government to rival the TNG. In April 2002 a group of six warlords in the southwest of the country unilaterally declared autonomy for their region and established a governing authority known as the Southwestern Regional Government. Despite this setback, in October 2002 21 warring factions and the TNG signed a ceasefire in an effort to promote peace talks.

While 2003 witnessed both progress and setbacks in the peace process in Somalia, by early 2004 Somalia’s main warlords and politicians signed an agreement to establish a new national parliament. This agreement held out the promise for the establishment of the first recognized national government since 1992. Somaliland’s leaders were the only group which was not party to the latest agreement. Under the new proposal the four major clans would each select 61 MPs and a coalition of small clans would select an additional 31 members of parliament. This new parliament would then be given the authority to select a new interim president. Elections are scheduled to be held after five years.

Members of the Transitional Parliament were sworn into office on 22 August 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. On 11 October 2004 Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, a member of the Darod clan, secured enough votes in second round balloting within the Transitional Parliament to claim the post of Interim President. While

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Somalia

the President selected Ali Muhammad Ghedi as Prime Minister in early November, he was not approved by the Transitional Parliament until late December. The Transitional Parliament had held up his confirmation on the grounds that the President had not followed the procedure provided for in the constitution when he appointed Ghedi. In early November 2004 President Yusuf requested the deployment of 20,000 international peacekeepers to Somalia in an effort to restore order, disarm the militias and train a 30,000 strong Somali army. The exiled Transitional Government returned to Somalia in June 2005, but faced strong opposition from various groups in the country and Mogadishu in particular. In November 2005 Prime Minister Ghedi survived an assassination attempt on his life.

In February 2006 the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) met in Somalia, in the central town of Baidoa, for the first time since it was formed in Kenya in 2004. Despite the return of the central government to Somalia, the spring of 2006 witnessed the worst violence in Mogadishu in over a decade as rival militias struggled to stake out their political space in the new political order. In the summer of 2006 militias loyal to the religious-based Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) took control of Mogadishu and other parts of south of the country after defeating rival warlords. Quickly establishing its control of the region, the UIC opened Mogadishu's air and seaports for the first time since 1995. With the political system now divided between the de jure government in Baidoa and the de facto government in Mogadishu, the Transitional Federal Government and the Union of Islamic Courts began peace talks in September 2006. A suicide attack on President Yusuf, however, quickly ended any serious efforts at political compromise and negotiation between these two groups.

Fearful of the rise of an Islamist government in Somalia (and with encouragement by the US), the Ethiopian government intervened militarily to help the Transitional Federal Government gain control of the capital in December 2006. Ethiopian and TFG forces captured Mogadishu on December 28. By the end of January 2007 the UIC had abandoned its last stronghold in the South, the port town of Kismayo. With the retreat of UIC forces from Mogadishu, President Yusuf entered Mogadishu for the first time since taking office in November 2004. Despite the imposition of a state of emergency by the TFG and the presence of Ethiopian troops in the capital, the peace did not hold. Supporters of the UIC continued to wage a guerilla insurrection against the TFG and its Ethiopian allies throughout the southern parts of the country. Pitched battles between these groups produced the worst violence in 15 years as hundreds of thousands of people in Mogadishu fled the city. While a national reconciliation conference opened in Mogadishu in July 2007, the UIC did not attend and the proceedings were subjected to sporadic mortar attacks. By the end of the year renewed fighting had engulfed the capital causing one of the worst humanitarian crises in Africa. Over 1,000,000 people have been displaced since the retreat of UIC forces from Mogadishu in December 2006. At the end of 2007 a government official stated that over 80% of the country was now outside of central government control. While the African Union has pledged 8,000 peacekeeping troops to Somalia to replace the Ethiopian forces in the country, less than 2,000 had arrived by the end of 2007 and Ethiopia remained mired in the country.

In November 2007, Nur Hussein ("Nur Ade") was appointed as prime minister of the TFG. A technocrat, with no strong political ties to any of the rival clans, Nur Ade was appointed with the hope of reinventing the weakened and fractured TFG. While he is a member of the Abgal sub-clan of the Hawiye clan (which is dominant in Mogadishu), nonetheless, he is seen as an honest civil servant who is untainted by the political struggles that have defined Somali politics for the past two decades.

Adan Muhammad Nur - also known as Adan Madobe - became interim president after Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed stepped down from the presidency at the end of 2008. President Yusuf resigned after a fierce power struggle with Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein, who was backed by parliament after Mr Yusuf tried to sack him. The two men had come to a political deadlock over how to best deal with the Islamist-led armed opposition that controls most of the south of the country. Yusuf had been chosen as president by the transitional parliament set up in 2004. Yusuf was viewed as an ally of Ethiopia, one of his country's traditional enemies, and a foe of Somalia's Islamists. Unfortunately, his reliance on Ethiopian military assistance was deeply unpopular with many of his fellow countrymen and undermined efforts to impose the authority of the transitional government on the country as a whole. As detailed by the Somali constitution, as speaker of parliament Mr Nur was required to take on the post until a new president could be elected.