

**The Somali Conflict: Why many peace initiatives have failed**

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Since the collapse of central authority in 1991, Somalia has been entangled in vicious conflicts that turn complex with each day that passes. The multiplicity of parties in the conflict has increased, consequently escalating the demands and motivation of the parties involved. The longer the conflict continues, the more challenging the mediation process gets.

This paper provides a brief insight into the genesis of the Somalia conflict and the various peace and reconciliation attempts to re-establish a functional state in the war torn country. The paper tries to examine the nature and spirit of these peace initiatives and why they have not achieved any solid success beyond the conference table. In conclusion, the paper endeavours to provide possibilities for an amicable peace process that provides space for the Somali people to reconstruct a functional and inclusive state system.

The content of this paper is clustered in six parts as follows:

- i. Political History of Somalia
- ii. Causes of the Conflict
- iii. Peace and Reconciliation Attempts
- iv. Why the Peace and Reconciliation initiatives have failed
- v. Possibilities for Peace and Reconciliation
- vi. Conclusion

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The first part provides an overview of the key Political happenings in Somalia from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to present day. The second part examines the causes of the Somali conflict while the third part looks at the initiatives undertaken so far in an effort to restore peace in Somalia. The fourth component analyses the reasons why the peace attempts have not achieved tangible results. The fifth part examines the possible options for a peaceful solution to the Somali conflict while the sixth and final part provides a wrapping up to the key issues underscored.

**I. Political History of Somalia**

Bordered by Kenya in the south, Ethiopia in the west, Djibouti in the northwest, the Gulf of Aden in the north, and the Indian Ocean in the east, Somalia forms the cap of the Horn of Africa. Covering an area of approximately 638,000 square kilometres, Somalia stands out among the states of Africa, because although its borders were shaped by the colonial powers, it is a nation-state. The Somali live not only in present-day Somalia and breakaway Somaliland to the north, but also in adjacent stretches of territory in Ethiopia (the OGADEN province) and Kenya (North Eastern Province).

Prior to the arrival of the western colonialists, the coastal region was settled by Arabs between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century leading to the emergence of trading centres such as MOGADISHU and KISIMAYO. Subsequently, Mogadishu became an Islamic Sultanate initially ruled by the Muzaffar Dynasty and later by the Dynasty of Fakhr ad-Din. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Omanis established control of Mogadishu, which was often interrupted by resistance by the inhabitants. With the partitioning of the Sultanate of Oman in 1841, Mogadishu became part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar, though also dependent on the Somali Geledi Clan. Further north on the Somali coast were located the MAJEERTEEN SULTANATES - the Sultanates of Migiurtina or Majeerteen, Obbia or Hobyo and Nogal.

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The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 stimulated European expansion into the region. By the end of the century, the Somali people were living under the rule of four foreign powers: the British (in north central Somalia and in northeast Kenya), the Italians (in southern Somalia), the French (in the northwest, in what is now Djibouti), and the Ethiopians (in the Ogaden region) (Noor, 2004)

Early in 1940, Italy invaded British Somaliland and threw out the British. A year later the British retook the protectorate, conquering Italian Somalia and the Ogaden as well, and placed all three under British administration. Britain administered the entire area for nearly a decade. This period witnessed a growing national awareness, as more and more Somalis questioned the legitimacy of colonial rule and called for political unity.

British control of Italian Somalia ended in November 1949, when the area became a U.N. trust territory. Somali nationalists in Italian Somalia won assurances of independence in a decade. These assurances in turn inspired Somalis in the British protectorate to press for independence and unity with Italian Somalia. Finally, the two areas were granted independence, and on July 1, 1960, they merged to form the Somali Republic.

On October 21, 1969, army units took over the control of the government. The commander of the armed forces Brigadier General Mohamed Siad Barre assumed leadership and installed a governing body; the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), and became its president. The SRC arrested and detained leading members of the government, banned all political parties, abolished the National Assembly and suspended the constitution. With time, discontent towards Barre's regime reached explosive levels and he was finally overthrown in 1991, and later died in 1995 while exiled in Nigeria. The forces that overthrew Siad Barre confronted each other over power and control of the country because their motivations were not based on common nationalistic interests, but quests for power and possessions.

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By the year 2000 the country was clustered into four parts — Somaliland to the north, Puntland to the northeast, South Mogadishu controlled by Hussein Muhammad Aided and North Mogadishu dominated by Ali Mahdi. Today Somaliland and Puntland have declared autonomy, with the former having established more credible democratic space. The map below shows the self-declared boundaries in Somalia.



**Figure 1 - Boundaries of Somaliland, Puntland and the rest of Somalia. These boundaries are not internationally recognized**

Series of peace talks have been held in an effort to bring the warring factions together but it was only 9 years later in August 2000 when an agreement was reached on a new Somali government. Abdikassim Salat Hassan was elected transitional president by various clan leaders at a gathering in Arta in neighbouring Djibouti.

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Violence fuelled by clan-based faction leaders unhappy with Arta arrangement persisted until 2002, when 21 factions and Abdikassim's transitional government signed a ceasefire sponsored by the regional body of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). After two more years of talks, a 275-member parliament chosen by clans was affirmed in August 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya culminating in the formation of the transitional Federal Government (TFG).

The TFG remained extremely fragile and split into hostile factions and was unable to exert order in the country. This created a political vacuum that was swiftly seized by the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) militia who managed to consolidate control over most of south and central Somalia. With support from Ethiopia, the TFG troops defeated the UIC forces but there was no follow-through and clan militias quickly mobilized themselves to take control in areas that were deserted by UIC fighters. UN Security Council authorised a 6-months AU peacekeeping mission (AMISOM) in February 2007. Uganda, Nigeria and Burundi pledged deployment of troops and EU, U.S. and UK financial support.

In September 2007, a new faction called Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) was formed with UIC leader Sharif elected chair. UN facilitated talks between TFG and Asmara-based ARS commenced in May 2008 culminating in the Djibouti agreement which was signed on 26 October 2008 by the TFG and ARS. AU peacekeeping mission still remains in Mogadishu with no consequence beyond the city. The Islamist insurgents have continued to fight the government for control of the country, despite the election of a new president, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad. The fighting has displaced more than 1.3 million people.

## **II. Causes of the Conflict**

While the parties at the centre of the Somali conflict claim to fight in the interest of their country, they have all achieved one result; deprivation and dehumanization of the Populace. Like in many confrontations of post-colonial Africa, the grounds of the Somali conflict are intractably intertwined that they are so similar on one hand and so different on the other, depending who you talk to and what media you access. The longevity of the conflict has with time blinded the original disagreements of the earlier years and created new grievances across the country. For the purpose of this paper, I will explore Somalia's colonial experience, the failure of the state, and external factors.

### **a) The colonial experience**

Like in many parts of the world where the citizens came in contact with colonialism, Somalia's ways of coping with disagreements were eroded. Distribution of resources was heavily skewed to reward the occupying powers and to some degree used to pacify few individuals and communities who were ready to serve the needs of the colonial masters. In order to access the agricultural products which were available in the south of Somalia, Italy promoted the members of the nomadic clans from the Mudug and Majertinia regions as the local elites.

Italy established a patrimonial path to state where they hired the members of the Mudug and Majertinia clans to fill up the lower and mid-level jobs. Such promotion of clan members from these 'chosen' regions forced the southern agrarian communities to pay heavily for the extractive colonial and post-colonial states.

Before the encounter with the colonial powers, Somalia was one expansive nation eating into parts of modern-day countries of Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. With the scramble for resources and strategic placement, colonial powers apportioned themselves specific regions for control.

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From the inception of independence, the Somali government supported the concept of self-determination for the people of the Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia (the Ogaden section), Kenya (most of the north-eastern region), and French Somaliland (now the Republic of Djibouti), including the right to be united within a greater Somalia (Enclopedia).

Ali Mazurui (2004) explains how Somalia was defaced into several entities.

If colonialism forced into the same political entity people who would otherwise have lived apart, it also separated people who would otherwise have lived together. A country like Somalia is in effect a nation trying to become an all-inclusive state. The Somali have scattered in four different countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Their desire for re-unification has resulted in deadly conflict (Mazurui, 2008).

The Ethiopia-Somalia Ogaden war (1976-1978) and the Shifta War (1963–1967) in North-eastern Kenya are a reflection the colonial dispersal of the Somali nation. While the countries at the centre of the ‘Somali nation’ do acknowledge the impact of the arbitrary borders set by colonial masters, none of them wish to discuss a reverse of the situation or formulate a regional strategy to cope with this phenomenon. This scenario is likely not to end any soon as explained by Henderson (2004).

Colonialism had arbitrarily focused dramatically disparate societies into single states that seemed doomed to fracture (although colonial boundaries were largely accepted by African elites under the principle of *uti possidetis*<sup>1</sup>). In many of these newly independent and culturally diverse states, culture became the primary criterion for political association, and political competition took on the complexion of inter-cultural competition” (Henderson, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> (Law) *International law* the rule that territory and other property remains in the hands of the belligerent state actually in possession at the end of a war unless otherwise provided for by treaty [from Latin, literally: as you possess]

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According to Mamdani (1996), Colonialism created and strengthened particularism (divisions based on ethnicity, language, religion, etc.) by creating new 'countries' with artificial boundaries often populated by politicised, suspicious and envious groups. In the case of Somalia, the colonial administration made the loose clan affiliation into a crafty identity schema driven by the 'divide and rule' philosophy. Overall, the colonial experience in Somalia cultivated cross-communal (clan/regional) animosities, mistrust, marginalization of communities, and separation of peoples who were hitherto one nation into states that did not address their special needs.

The clashing interests of colonial powers (Italy, French, and Italian) as well as cold war competition (Soviet Union and USA) further led to increase in autocratic regimes whose main focus was to control the populace. This was supported by the increased flow of ammunition and territorial tensions that followed in the early days post-independence.

**b) The Failure of the state**

The period after independence was marked by a brief term of tranquillity but rivalries and disagreements worsened leading to the assassination of then President Abdirashid 'Ali Shermarke, on 15 October 1969. This led to a swift seizure of power by the Military six days later, consequently emasculating the key arms of government. The military dissolved parliament, suspended the constitution, arrested members of the cabinet, and changed the name of the country to the Somali Democratic Republic. Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, commander of the army, was named chairman of a 25-member Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) that assumed the powers of the president, the Supreme Court, and the National Assembly.

With Siad Barre as president, all the power revolved around him and a few of his close associates, rendering all government institutions impotent. Cosmetic efforts were made to reinstate democratic space by ratifying a new constitution in 1979.

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However, there was no change of leadership as Siad Barre was unanimously elected by the 171 People's Assembly members, who were themselves elected unopposed. This process was replicated in 1984. The process of exclusion did not stop, as elaborated by Akokpari (2004).

Similarly, Somalia's seemingly intractable conflict originated from former strongman Siad Barre's choice of privileging only three of Somalia's numerous clans – those of Barre, his mother and his principle son-in-law – and marginalizing the rest (Adam 1995: 72).

Such politics of exclusion had the predictable consequence of fueling inter-clan animosity and violence (Akokpari, 2008).

By 1990, the Somali regime was losing control. Armed resistance from the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA), the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), the Somali National Movement (SNM), the Somali Patriot Movement (SPM), and the United Somali Congress (USC) were turning the Somali territory into a state of anarchy.

Last minute efforts by Siad Barre for dialogue and, possibly, an end to single-party rule did not bear fruit as he was ultimately ousted in January 1991, fleeing Mogadishu. The USC seized the capital, but fighting continued. The SNM controlled much of the north and declared its territory the independent state of "Somaliland". By December 1991, the USC had split in two. One faction was led by Ali Mahdi Muhammad, the interim president, the other by Gen. Muhammad Farrah Aideed, both of them from the Hawiye clan but different sub-clans. The collapse of the central government created a myriad of problems including incapacity to respond to basic needs and services such as food, shelter, health, Education and security. With no functioning central government, regional and clan-based movements mobilized themselves to gain control state resources as a way of their own survival.

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The access to weapons by civilians in a period of deprivation 'licensed' citizens to turn to weapons as a mode of survival and defence during the disparate economic times of the 1980s. The profusion of the weaponry was a consequence of Somalia's hyper-militarisation since independence, combined with the armed forces who were impoverished by the economic decline and rampant inflation. With the passage of time, the conflict became more commercialized and the focus changed from basic community needs to the urge for individual economic power controlled by merciless warlords. While the conflict continues to inflict gross suffering on the common populace on hand, the continued instability is the only way the warlords can guarantee their economic interests and control over the citizens through fear and human rights abuses.

Given that the Siad Barre regime had paralysed many National institutions, the state collapse was swift leaving civilians to loot available resources, including artillery and ammunition that had been left behind by the retreating government forces. With uncontrolled flow of arms, the stage for war was clear since then, and there has been no looking back.

**c) External factors**

Somalia occupies a strategic position in the Horn of Africa and enjoys ties with other African countries as a member of the African Union and other regional bodies such as IGAD and the Arab League. Somalia's strategic location has generated great interest among global powers who seek to promote and protect their economic and political influence in the region. The US government for example (Wander, 2010) shipped around 40 tonnes of weapons and ammunition to the transitional government last year (2009), including mortar rounds, in a bid to bolster its beleaguered position in the face of increasingly powerful armed opposition groups like Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam.

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The US believes that the armed groups fighting to topple the government have ties to al-Qaeda and have been alarmed by their takeover of vast swathes of the country (Wander, 2010). This policy is a continuation of the cold war practices of arming states and groups to undermine those perceived to be problematic. In essence, this only exacerbates the suffering of civilians who bear the wrath of armed conflict. In 1980 for example, Somalia and the United States signed an agreement that permitted the United States to use military facilities at the port of Berbera. In exchange, Washington agreed to provide Barre with \$20 million in credits for the purchase of military equipment, \$5 million in budgetary support, and \$20 million in general credits that year. But the change in its geo-political alignment did not save Somalia, which was already beyond redemption. (Ayittey, 1994)

The economic decline in the mid-1980s and the end of the cold war had a strong bearing on the state events in many countries including Somalia due to reduced foreign aid and cooperation. Hitherto, Somalia had enjoyed support from both the Soviet Union and the United States of America, albeit for different motivations. With the cold war losing its vigor, the super powers had no driving urge to keep supporting states and regimes that were not of great value to their new priorities. The Soviet Union was embroiled in the struggle to hold onto her crumbling empire; while the USA was more focused on forging greater alliances with Western Europe as well as baiting the new eastern European states that were willing to embrace the Western Democracy. The abrupt decline in foreign aid exposed the government of Somalia to funding deficits translating to inability to support and sustain essential services such as health, food and social services. The situation was exacerbated by a long drought that hit the horn of Africa in the late eighties that dissipated the country's food basket. With a despotic regime in place, the priority remained on military security at the expense of basic services for the people. This created disharmony among the population and hence the formation of infinite opposition factions that made the country ungovernable.

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The trade in arms by the competing cold war forces also militarized the horn of Africa, a situation which delighted the ruling class in the region whose primary pre-occupation was suppression of political change movements. The availability of armory in the midst of almost rag-tag armies and lacking central command in some cases, opened avenues for disillusionment and lack of commitment to maintaining national security.

**III. Peace and Reconciliation Attempts**

Since the collapse of the Somalia central government in 1991, several attempts have been made to conciliate the warring parties. Regional states such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Egypt as well as International and regional organizations such as the UN and IGAD have intervened with the aim of creating peace in the war torn country. However, due to the fast changing dynamics in the conflict, most of the agreements are often overtaken by events and left to decay. In view of the plethora of the conferences held over the past 19 years, this paper will try to address the initial humanitarian intervention by the United Nations, as well as three peace initiatives. The Djibouti agreements – August 2000 and May 2008, and the Eldoret/Nairobi –Kenya from October 2002 to October 2004 which, formulated transitional authorities for Somalia.

**a) The humanitarian intervention**

At the height of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, the UN Security Council passed a resolution in December 1992 to deploy a US-led international military intervention (UNITAF-United Task Force) to safeguard relief operations in Somalia. However, US forces shifted their mandate from protection of relief supplies to attempting to confiscate arms and "technicals"—vehicles with mounted heavy weapons.

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Whilst the issue of securing relief supplies had been comparatively solved, the change of focus of the US forces, inclined armed militias and warlords in Mogadishu to perceive international forces as direct parties to the conflict. On 4 May 1993 the relief effort, commonly known as 'Operation Restore Hope' was declared successful, and US force levels were sharply reduced. The command of relief, disarmament, and reconstruction work was assumed by the UN under the umbrella of UNOSOM II. The force was a composition of Pakistani, US, Belgian, Italian, Moroccan, and French troops, commanded by a Turkish general. On 23 June 1993, 23 Pakistani soldiers were killed in an ambush, and the UN Security Council ordered the arrest of those responsible including General Aideed. In the ensuing battles 18 US Army rangers were killed and 75 others were wounded. This was followed by the withdrawal of US troops in March 1994 in response to public opinion pressure back home.

In recognizing the fact that coercive strategy had failed and that a more neutral role was desirable, the Security Council Resolution (897) redefined the UNOSOM II mandate, emphasizing peacemaking and reconstruction. The United States completed its withdrawal of troops in March 1995, after which Mogadishu again disintegrated amid anarchy.

**b) The Arta conference**

The Somali national peace conference held in Arta - Djibouti in the year 2000 was momentous because it was endorsed by neighbouring countries as well as the regional initiative of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). After five months of talks, the parties came up with the Arta Declaration in August 2000 that gave way to the formation of the Transitional National Government (TNG) led by Abdulqasim Salad Hassan.

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In contrast to previous meetings, the Arta conference had broad participation by unarmed civic leaders – including intellectuals, clan and religious leaders and members of the business community. The meeting, though boycotted by powerful Mogadishu warlords, it managed to incorporate several of the less dominant warlords. The meeting was also boycotted by the powerful Abdullahi Yusuf from Puntland who preferred a federal structure.

The TNG was the first Somali government since 1991 to secure a measure of international recognition, enabling Somalia to reoccupy her seat at the UN and in regional bodies. The TNG however, lacked sufficient assistance to function and continued to be at crossroads with Abdullahi Yusuf who by then was receiving support from the Ethiopian establishment. Subsequently, Abdullahi Yusuf met with 17 other Somali political groups and their allies in Awasa, Ethiopia, in March 2001 where the *Somalia* Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC) was formed to oppose the Arta process and the TNG, and to advance the formation of a federal Somali state.

**c) The Eldoret conference**

IGAD called the Eldoret conference in an endeavour to reconcile the TNG with its SRRC rivals. In essence, this new initiative was in divergence with the Arta meeting because the TNG mandate had not terminated. Nonetheless, IGAD proceeded with the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, held in Eldoret, Kenya, in October 2002. The first task of the conference was to secure a ceasefire agreement which was subsequently signed by 24 faction leaders stipulating the need to create a federal structure, and thereby reversing the unitary structure established at Arta. After 2 years of deliberation by 300 delegates, an agreement on a Transitional Federal Charter and the selection of 275 members of parliament was realised. Consequently, the members of parliament elected Abdullahi Yusuf as President of the TFG in October 2004.

**d) Djibouti Meeting – 2009**

In September 2007, a new faction called Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) was formed with the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) leader Sharif elected chair. With its base in Eritrea, the ARS became increasingly influential in Somali politics and it was no longer feasible to exclude them from the Somali peace process. The UN initiated talks between TFG and ARS in May 2008 culminating in the Djibouti agreement signed in January 2009. In an assembly in neighbouring Djibouti, Somalia's parliament swore in 149 new members from the ARS and eventually elected Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as President. The parliament also extended the mandate of transitional government for another two years. In February 2009 President Ahmed appointed Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke to be prime minister.

**IV. Why the Peace and Reconciliation initiatives failed**

Several reasons may be given for the failure of the numerous peace initiatives;

- a. Insufficient analysis of the dynamics of the Somali conflict resulted in ineffective prescriptions. While clans represented a key centre of Somali relationships, the peace initiatives failed to distinguish genuine community needs from manipulative positions of the warlords. The warlords exploited this situation to contrive the clan factor to push personal ambitions that only escalated the conflict.
- b. The hurry, at which the peace initiatives were executed, resulted in the omission of key parties from the process. It is by no surprise that the late Mogadishu warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed coined the expression '*looma dhamma*' – 'not inclusive' in reference to the various conferences on Somalia ('Xildhiban').
- c. Some of the efforts failed because they did not take adequate account of the peculiarity of the Somali conflict, which called for new approaches.

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Most of the solutions were borrowed from elsewhere with the assumption that they would work for Somalia too.

- d. The processes lacked co-ordination and the effort was not sustained on the part of the international community to address the crisis. Most of the efforts were characterised by piecemeal attempts involving a touch-and-go approach. This gave mixed signals to the warring parties, and failed to maximize on the few resources available.
- e. Some of the interventions were 'too little, too late' in that they were not timely and were inadequate. Even in the face of mounting catastrophes, members of the international community had failed to deliver on their promises to protect civilians due to deployment of poorly-equipped missions. The missions had inadequate numbers of personnel compounded with weak and problematic mandates. The later was evident in UNITAF and UNOSOM II.
- f. With the dire humanitarian situation in Somalia, some interventions have either derailed the peace process or changed focus to other global concerns such as the fight against terrorism and piracy. Much of the focus had been on addressing the symptoms of the conflict rather than the root causes.
- g. The approach of the international community to the crisis has been skewed towards reconciling warlords, who carried responsibility for the protracted conflict instead of mitigating the suffering of the Somali people.
- h. Most of the conferences and agreements were either lead or hosted by external powers. This did not provide room for inclusive dialogue that would embrace the views and aspirations of the common Somali people. As a result, the outcomes have not been owned or recognized by the general populace back home.
- i. Both the Arta and the federal charter employed a power-sharing formula dividing Somali clans into four major ones and condensing all others into smaller representation.

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This procedure received resistance from the administrations in Somaliland and Puntland who felt that the applied method narrowed their opportunities to represent their own regions effectively.

**V. Possibilities for Peace and reconciliation**

The situation in Somalia has dragged on for too long and degenerated into anarchy that presents a scenario of impossibilities. But borrowing from the words of Mohandas K. Gandhi “*we are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming the possible of today*” it is paramount that we do not shy away from big challenges of today for they are likely to be the possibilities of tomorrow. With this in mind, it is extremely vital that all opportunities are explored to bring stability and peace to Somalia.

In his speech to the General assembly on larger freedoms (2005), the UN secretary General summed the relationship between freedoms and development as follows: “*...We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed...*” It is therefore paramount that any interventions on Somalia encompass all aspects of human life to succeed.

The following are some of the viable options that could facilitate a transition to peace for the Somali people:

- a. Initiate a genuine process to address and solve past wrongs that were committed against mainly the sedentary communities in Southern Somalia. The main process being on acknowledging the past and creating opportunities where communities are secure and equally represented. The process should acknowledge Somalia’s unique situation and focus on utilizing locally acceptable tools including religion and tradition.

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- b. Mobilize the human and material support of the Somalis in the Diaspora to help in the reconstruction of the country including the setting up of key state institutions. Some of the communities in the Diaspora have a major influence on warring factions, either as members of same clans or suppliers of funds and political strategy.
- c. Allow autonomy to regions and build their democratic practices to be able to manage the available resources and ensure security. The regions will function in a federal system with a central government in place to oversee national security, foreign relations and central bank.
- d. Allow the Somali people to decide on what type of law they wish to adhere to without coercion from the international community as to what laws should govern Somalia. The only condition is that the decision should be made by the Somali people in a participatory and inclusive manner.
- e. Rely less on western solutions and promote an active involvement of the Union of Islamic states, the African Union and the Arab league to facilitate peace talks because most of the parties involved in the conflict are ready to listen to regional solutions instead of those from the west. Interaction by western countries should be complimentary and directed by the views of the Somali people. Aid for the peace process and reconstruction should not be influenced by Western interests and political preferences. The International community should be open to any option from the Somali people that contribute to long lasting Peace. There should be NO pre-determined positions, because this will harm the peace process.
- f. Establish a special program for demobilization to include integration of ex-combatants into gainful economic skills and enterprise, as well as establish strict monitoring flow of armoury into Somalia, including prosecution of such traffickers.

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- g. The clan leadership should be involved as evidenced in Somaliland where the house of elders popularly known as the 'Gurti' has played a significant role in bringing nurturing stability.
- h. Find viable solutions to the refugee and internally displaced persons. The continued displacement situation has denied people their livelihoods and freedoms. This drives them towards lawlessness, manipulation and abuse.
- i. Build a coalition of support to the Somali nation by Somalia's neighbours. Collaboration amongst these countries will prioritize harmony amongst the Somali people and also provide tangible development support to the Somali inhabited areas. This will reduce animosity amongst boarder communities and peaceful co-existence. In addition, the countries in the horn of Africa should ease movement across the boarders for communities to interact culturally and economically.

**VI. Conclusion**

Given the longevity of the Somalia conflict, the intensity of human suffering has widened to inconceivable heights. The actors in the Somalia violence have disregarded any rules of engagement in war fare, most notable being the indiscriminate execution of rockets suicide bombing and mortars into public facilities including markets and residential areas. Like a human body whose immune system has been severely damaged and prone to numerous opportunistic infections, Somalia has become precariously susceptible to frequent conflicts due to collapsed state institutions. While the role of the UN and International actors is welcome, it is clear that the U.S. and UN interventions in Somalia are unlikely to resolve the country's crisis because they do not offer solutions based on African initiatives.

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Only the Somali people and their African brothers bear the ultimate responsibility for solving their problems and they are only ones capable of providing a lasting solution. It is extremely important that the parties in the conflict are also seen as part of the solution and all possible ways should be explored to include them in the peace process. In response to the rising influence of the Al-Shabaab movement, Barack Obama, the US president, has issued an executive order to freeze assets of individuals with ties to the movement as they are seen as allies of al-Qaeda, driving them to extreme positions.

Finally, I ask that we borrow from the wise words of Mary Parker Follet (1868-1933)

There are three ways of dealing with difference: domination, compromise, and integration. By domination only one side gets what it wants; by compromise neither side gets what it wants; by integration we find a way by which both sides may get what they wish”

It is my sincere hope that all the Somali people can get what they wish through integration.

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