



PeaceRep

Peace and Conflict
Resolution Evidence
Platform

Key Findings: Somalia

PeaceRep's Somalia research aims to deepen understandings of the country's fragmented predicament, ten years after the establishment of the federal government and in light of ongoing conflict and political instability, both domestically and regionally. Browse our key findings below.

[Read more about our Somalia research focus and teams.](#)

Peace Processes

In 2017, a significant peace agreement was signed in Galkayo, following two to three years of recurring violence and negotiations. The agreement was an example of successful Somali activism and peacemaking alongside appropriate support from regional and international stakeholders. The agreement took place within the early years of the broader statebuilding process in Somalia, following Somalia's international recognition. The agreement-making process required sensitivity to national and local contexts and included a strong Somali identity among the international actors ([Abdirahman & Majid, 2024b](#)).

The agreement re-established social relations and encouraged economic investment across a significant border area where a long-standing ceasefire had previously been in place. The political, economic and social trajectory of Galkayo has generally been positive since the agreement ([Abdirahman, 2023](#); [Abdirahman & Majid, 2024b](#)).

Although the 2017 agreement represents a major development in Somalia's political evolution, it remains incomplete and unfinished due to the lack of subsequent inter-clan agreements and the lack of enforcement of agreement principles ([Abdirahman & Majid, 2024b](#)).

A spate of revenge killings have escalated since early 2023, threatening the underlying agreement and peace ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2023b](#); [2024b](#)). To mitigate the potential for escalating revenge killing and improved law and order, PeaceRep research recommends the following ([Abdirahman & Majid, 2024b](#)):

- Government leadership in Garowe, Dhusamareb and Mogadishu should support a sufficiently strong, joint police force in Galkayo, including identifying and apprehending known criminal elements.
- Elders require engagement and support to pursue and/or maintain inter-clan agreements.
- Support and encouragement to networks of peace activists, including credible elders, women and youth groups would have beneficial impact in Galkayo and could demonstrate to other parts of the country the potential of social activism and civil society.
- International actors can demonstrate a commitment to peacebuilding in Somalia by engaging in Galkayo and supporting progress that has been made since 2017, based on the learning that has been documented around the 2017 Galkayo Agreement.

PeaceRep's Somalia work links themes of peace agreements with those of justice and security. By comparing Kismayo and Galkayo towns, our work reveals the importance of different local contexts and their political history and culture in informing how peace and security is maintained ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#)).

Inclusion

Incorporating analysis of inclusion/exclusion dynamics is a key aspect of PeaceRep's work and engagement in Somalia. In August 2022 the Somalia government, under recently elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, launched an offensive against the militant Islamic group, Al Shabaab. This major new security initiative

dominated the agenda of the new government and was of considerable interest to the wider international community. This was the first major initiative launched against Al Shabaab since the establishment of the Federal Government (internationally recognised in 2013). Given its importance, the Somalia government has an interest in controlling the narrative concerning the progress of the Offensive ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2023a](#)).

The Offensive raises concerns around the strategy of mobilising powerful (and expansionist) clan-based militias as part of this initiative. In doing so, the Offensive is feeding underlying grievances with marginalised communities who are not part of this initiative and whom, in response, can turn to Al Shabaab for protection ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2023a, 2024b](#)).

Corruption

Ten years into the establishment of Somalia's Federal arrangement, Somalia's political system remains essentially the same under the current regime as it has been under its previous cycles, albeit with some changes in character and emphasis. That is, the logic of a transactional politics, including the use of targeted violence and/or material incentives determines political survival at the expense of longer-term institution building ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#)).

Systemic and pervasive corruption is a feature of the Somali environment and one that is enabled by the nature of international engagement. Recent attention on the humanitarian sector in this regard is important but is largely fiddling at the margins in comparison to corruption in the security and development areas, particularly through logistics contracting ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#); [Jackson & Majid, 2024](#)).

The tensions between different imperatives in international engagement in Somalia, between security, migration control, humanitarian/development/statebuilding need acknowledging and interrogating as factors influencing effective programming ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#)).

Deepening political volatility across the Red Sea arena (the Gulf and the Horn of Africa) serves the interests of competing domestic elites who can turn to different patrons for financial or security-related support ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#)).

At the mid-term point in the current Presidential cycle, the public and international goodwill that accompanied Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud's (HSM) election and initial focus on the offensive against Al Shabaab has been steadily undermined by the offensive's lack of success and a pervasive return of clannism, corruption and

nepotism; these characteristics are likely to continue and intensify as all elites turn their attention to controlling and manipulating forthcoming elections ([Majid & Abdirahman, 2024a](#)).

Security Governance

As of 2022, peace and security governance in Somalia is currently highly regionalised in the domain of peace missions, due to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)'s fifteen-year deployment and the troop contributions of IGAD states. However, it is less regionalised when it comes to the complex space of peace processes. The peace process engagement activities of the UN, AU, and IGAD significantly overlap, with shifting leadership ([Coe & Nash, 2022](#)).

AMISOM exemplifies both the promises and challenges of subsidiarity in the African region. In mounting AMISOM, the AU demonstrated its greater ability and willingness to deploy troops to conflict situations (compared to the UN). However, AMISOM relies on troops from Somalia's neighbours, and these states have vested and competing interests in Somali politics. Additionally, the AU faces major resource constraints, necessitating extraregional funding and support for AMISOM. Although at the end of 2023, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed a resolution paving the way for the AU to access assessed contributions on a case by case basis, which may help with stable and predictable funding ([Coe & Nash, 2022](#)).

The willingness of the AU to deploy – coupled with resource constraints – creates the need for partnership between regional organisations and the UN, and the mission in Somalia has developed an innovative mechanism to advance this partnership (UN Support Office in Somalia – UNSOS). However, UN-AU relations are also characterized by competition and conflict, and there has been disagreement and competition regarding AMISOM's political mandate. The UN and AU have engaged in a decades long debate about the role of the regional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and this debate and how it plays out in practice with responsibility for and authority in peace and security continues ([Coe & Nash, 2022](#)).

Third-Party Actors

Over the past decade Turkey has emerged as a significant actor in the greater Middle East, North and sub-Saharan Africa due to its development, peacebuilding engagement, and cultural and commercial penetration of these regions ([Sofos, 2023](#)).

PeaceRep research into the modalities of Turkey's engagement in the Horn indicates that Turkish

involvement in conflicts is increasingly characterised using violent, militarised, non-inclusive methods alongside the deployment of soft power. Turkey’s involvement is usually partisan and often divisive. Lack of coordination with other external actors in the region means that capacity building, know-how transfer projects (especially training of military and security forces), and technical aid are conducive to institutional fragmentation and the cultivation of military, political and economic dependence among the recipients of Turkish support (Sofos, 2023).

PeaceRep research suggests that efforts should be directed towards (Sofos, 2023):

- Measures conducive to the desecuritisation of development, statebuilding in the Horn of Africa, and to greater regional integration;
- Dialogue with Turkey in tandem with encouraging democratisation;
- Progressively reintegrating Turkey to western institutions and encouraging it to be involved in multilateral initiatives that can engender shared conceptualisations of security and peace and transform the current antagonistic outlook of Turkish policies into complementarity and cooperation.

When referencing these key findings, please cite the individual research paper or blog referenced in the text.

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PeaceRep is funded by UK International Development from the UK government, building on the work of the Political Settlements Research Programme led by the University of Edinburgh Law School from 2015 – 2020.

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