



# COUNTRY REPORT: Somalia

May 2012





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# Executive Summary



## OVERVIEW

Understanding master narratives can be the difference between analytic anticipation and unwanted surprise, as well as the difference between communications successes and messaging gaffes. Master narratives are the historically grounded stories that reflect a community's identity and experiences, or explain its hopes, aspirations, and concerns. These narratives help groups understand who they are and where they come from, and how to make sense of unfolding developments around them. As they do in all countries, effective communicators in Somalia invoke master narratives in order to move audiences in a preferred direction. Somali influencers rely on their native familiarity with these master narratives to use them effectively. This task is considerably more challenging for US communicators and analysts because they must place themselves in the mindset of foreign audiences who believe stories that— from an American vantage point— may appear surprising, conspiratorial, or even outlandish.

This report serves as a resource for addressing this challenge in two ways. First, it surfaces a set of eight master narratives carefully selected based on their potency in the Somali context and relevance to US strategic interests. Second, this report follows a consistent structure for articulating these narratives and explicitly identifies initial implications for US communicators and analysts. The set outlined here is not exhaustive: these eight master narratives represent a first step that communicators and analysts can efficiently apply to the specific messaging need or analytic question at hand. For seasoned Somali experts, these narratives will already be familiar—the content contained in this report can be used to help check assumptions, surface tacit knowledge, and aid customer communications. For newcomers to Somalia accounts, these narratives offer deep insights into the stories and perceptions that shape the Somali political context that may otherwise take years to accumulate.

Some master narratives cut across broad stretches of the Somali populace, while others are held only by particular audience segments. This study divides Somalia into six audience segments that demonstrate how different master narratives resonate with different sections of the populace. Each of the eight master narratives aligns with one or more of the following segments: Centralists, Regionalists, Somaliland Nationalists, Salafi Islamists, Sufi Islamists, and Moderate Islamists. (See the Appendix for a detailed description of these audience segments.) This audience segmentation is tailored specifically to surface important Somali master narratives and the interactions between them. Somali society is heavily influenced by longstanding clan structures, with some clan affiliations creating intractable intergroup conflict while other affiliations are more fluid in response to shifting political priorities. Some of the master narratives profiled in this report are deeply informed by clan dynamics, while others transcend clan allegiances altogether. Based on this, the audience segmentation in this report provides an additional lens for understanding competing and interconnected camps in Somali politics and society.

## THE MASTER NARRATIVES

The table on the following page summarizes the Somalia master narratives highlighted in this report. For each narrative, it specifies the relevant audience segments as well as the narrative's core themes. The condensed narrative description simulates the voice of someone who believes in the narrative itself, helping communicators and analysts immerse themselves in the mindset of the foreign audience.

Narrative Title & Audience Segments	Condensed Master Narrative A description of the master narrative as it might be articulated by one who subscribes to it	Core Narrative Themes
<b>The Foreign Oppressors</b> <i>Broadly held across segments</i>	Before the colonists came and destroyed the nation, Somalia prospered. Since then, foreign powers from Ethiopia to the United States have preyed on Somalia and plotted to steal its wealth, fueling conflict in Somalia. Somalis must drive out all foreign influences from the country and build their own solutions to Somalia's problems. Only then will Somalia return to a state of peace and stability.	Pride, Exceptionalism, Frustration, Distrust
<b>Greater Somalia</b> <i>Broadly held across segments</i>	Somalis were once a united people that shared a common language, culture, and religion. But Westerners split the country apart, and today millions of Somali people still live under the control of neighboring states. The Somali people must restore Somalia's proper boundaries— <i>Somaliweyn</i> (Greater Somalia)—and form a strong, powerful country so that its people can be reunited and protected once again.	Pride, Nationalism, Exceptionalism, Kinship, Nostalgia
<b>Nation of Entrepreneurs</b> <i>Broadly held across segments</i>	Even during times of conflict, Somalis have always been successful entrepreneurs. However, Somalia's instability has prevented its business community from growing. Somali politicians need to form a stable government that connects Somalia's economy to the rest of the world, which will allow the entrepreneurial spirit of the Somali people to flourish.	Pride, Exceptionalism, Peace
<b>Somalia of the People</b> <i>Regionalists, Sufi Islamists</i>	Somalis thrived under their traditional clan-based system. Since the colonists came with their foreign ideas, Somalis have suffered under numerous failed central governments. Somalis must return to a regional structure based on Somali tradition, empowering local leaders to build governments that control their own affairs. This is the only political system that will ever work for the Somali people.	Pragmatism, Power, Control, Peace
<b>National Unity</b> <i>Centralists, Moderate Islamists</i>	The first central government in Somalia in 1960 promised a modern political structure that would lead Somalia to stability, but it fell victim to corruption and clan-based conflict. Years of incompetent governments have led the people to despair, but Somalia must not give up. Somalis must come together to support a strong national Somali government in order to attain the peace and stability they deserve.	Pragmatism, Power, Control, Peace
<b>The Political Widow</b> <i>Somaliland Nationalists</i>	Somaliland prospered until it merged with Italian Somalia in 1960. Despite the chaos in the south and the lack of international support, Somaliland has repaired itself, forming a stable society and democratic government. Somaliland must reclaim its rightful independence and gain international recognition as its own powerful and successful country. Only then can it be free of Somalia's burdens and grow as a prosperous nation.	Exceptionalism, Pragmatism, Peace
<b>Jihad Against the Apostates</b> <i>Salafi Islamists</i>	In the time of Muhammad, Islam in Somalia was pure. However, Somali Islam has become corrupt, and God has punished the country with violence and civil war. Somalis must wage jihad to rid their land of foreign, Sufi, and Christian influence and return to Islam of the Salaf. Only then will Somalis restore peace and bring justice and stability to their country.	Anger, Frustration, Power, Control
<b>Return of the Tariqas</b> <i>Sufi Islamists</i>	Somalia once enjoyed peaceful and tolerant Sufi Islam under traditional Sufi religious orders, <i>tariqas</i> , but foreign ideologies and extremist groups have shattered this way of life. Local leaders must restore the local Sufi traditions so Somalis can reestablish rule by their native tradition of tolerant and peaceful Islam.	Nostalgia, Peace, Control

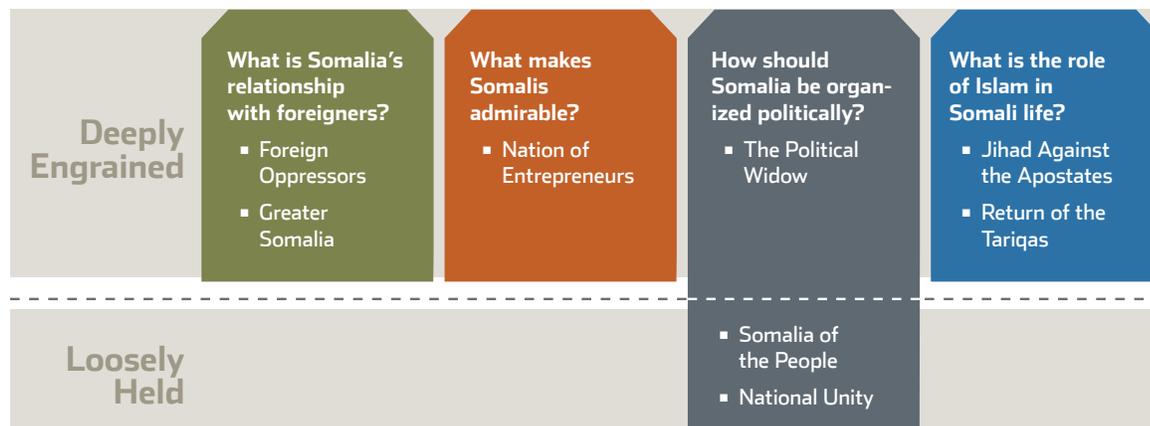
*These master narratives were developed and validated through extensive open source research and subject matter expert outreach, and were further vetted by USG Somalia analysts.*

## KEY FINDINGS

Somalia's master narrative landscape sheds light on critical questions about the country's internal divisions and regional relations, in particular Somalia's prospects for overcoming its political fragmentation and resisting violent extremist groups. Looking across the Somali master narrative landscape, almost all of these narratives call for actions that will produce a distinct political loser. Not surprisingly, those who would stand to "lose" naturally reject these master narratives and rally behind their own, opposing worldviews. This broadly adversarial

political mentality creates challenges for strategic communicators, who may find themselves in positions where it is difficult to avoid appearing to take sides in volatile internal disputes. It also creates opportunities for analysts, who can track the political fortunes of different Somali groups and factions based on the rise and fall in usage of different master narratives among key influencers and the public.

The figure below depicts this landscape across two dimensions: how each master narrative sheds light on critical questions shaping Somali society and politics, and the extent to which the narratives command unwavering subscriber commitment or are more loosely held. Moving from left to right, the figure demonstrates how each master narrative is focused on a particular question. Above the dotted line are narratives for which subscriber beliefs are largely fixed and unwavering—areas where there is little room for negotiation or dispute resolution. Below the line are two narratives where subscriber commitment is more fluid, resulting in shifting beliefs and allegiances based on political expediency.



**What is Somalia's relationship with foreigners?** A deeply-engrained suspicion of foreigners appears throughout the Somali master narrative landscape, with foreigners and foreign ideas frequently taking the blame for sowing division among Somalis. For communicators, these master narratives present US communicators with a range of potential pitfalls related to anti-foreigner sentiments and conspiracy theories, as well as opportunities for discrediting US adversaries, such as Al-Shabaab, who can be associated with foreign ideas. For analysts, how key influencers utilize these narratives can shed light on potential conflict between Somalia and its neighbors, and the ways in which the United States or its partners may become targets of Somali anger or blame.



**What makes Somalis admirable?** Many Somalis find hope for reconciling internal differences by pointing to Somalis' ability to prosper economically even amid chronic instability and political turmoil. Somalis' entrepreneurial spirit and relative economic success is one of the few generally uncontested sources of national pride. For communicators, Somalis' business interests offer an avenue for finding common cause with the United States, a society that Somalis recognize as sharing a commercial and entrepreneurial culture. For analysts, the use of this master narrative may provide a useful signal that a particular group is moving away from ideological or zero-sum power calculations, and toward a commitment to delivering more inclusive forms of governance. As such, its use may indicate a stabilizing political environment within Somalia.



**How should Somalia be organized politically?** The two loosely held master narratives about Somali politics represent the fundamental tension between competing visions for a centralized or decentralized (federal) Somali state. While many Somalis have a deep-seated suspicion that the state is a predatory institution, there is also a widespread desire for a more effective state apparatus. Reflecting this ambivalence, support for centralist or federalist master narratives is usually not a matter of deep ideological commitment, but more often depends on shifting interests and power dynamics: Somali audiences switch between support for centralization and decentralization in part depending on political expediency. The exception to this shifting pattern is the "Political Widow" master narrative of Somaliland nationalism, which firmly asserts Somaliland's right to independence from the rest of Somalia. For communicators, these master narratives can be used to more effectively navigate Somalia's competitive political environment, while raising awareness of messaging that could be construed as the United States "taking sides" in Somalia's heated debates about the appropriate form of government. For analysts, the shifting use of these master narratives by Somali key influencers and audience segments can improve the USG's ability to track shifting political priorities and allegiances between different clans and political groups.



**What is the role of Islam in Somali life?** Contrasting Somalia's longstanding Sufi traditions against a Salafi brand of Islam, the two master narratives identified here represent deeply held and opposing master narratives about the proper form and place of Islam in Somali life. Subscribers to each narrative seek to defeat and sometimes eradicate the opposing side, and this conflict has been a major driver behind Somali internal violence since 2006. For strategic communicators, these master narratives offer handrails for discrediting hardline Islamists and for supporting more tolerant forms of political Islam. For analysts, the evolution and deployment of these master narratives can be used to track the evolving political ambitions of various Somali strains of political Islam, as well as the likelihood that these different strains will promote or endorse violence.

Since 1991, many political and security analysts have described Somalia as a failed state, lacking effective centralized governance institutions and experiencing recurring humanitarian crises. Although Somalia's master narrative landscape reveals that beneath the veneer of lawlessness there lurks a widespread hunger for political order, it also shows just how difficult it will be to overcome Somalia's history of division. Not only do the different master narratives disagree—often violently—about who is to blame for Somalia's problems, most of them also explicitly or implicitly involve calls to action that will produce clear losers. Whether the topic is Somalia's relationship with outsiders, the place of religion in Somali life or the appropriate form of governance, the Somali master narrative landscape represents politics as a zero sum game in which one side's gain necessarily implies another side's loss. Those excluded from power in turn find longstanding master narratives that justify violent opposition to the status quo and legitimize their rejection of any settlement. The zero-sum mentality revealed by the master narratives landscape suggests just how difficult it will be to overcome Somalia's political fragmentation: the master narratives themselves will have to change, and this process could take decades or generations to unfold across the Somali populace. While resolving these challenges may take decades, the insights outlined in this report offer US communicators and analysts opportunities to incrementally strengthen how the United States navigates and understands this challenging and complex political environment. This, in turn, can help in positioning the United States as a productive player in the long-term effort to bolster Somali governance and stability.

## REPORT STRUCTURE & PAYOFFS

The remainder of this document provides greater analytic detail for the Somali master narratives outlined above. Each master narrative is articulated and analyzed in five pieces:

1. **Audience Segment:** With which audience segments does this master narrative reside?
2. **Master Narrative:** How might a subscriber to this master narrative describe it, what evidence reinforces these beliefs, and how do influencers leverage this narrative for their own political aims?
3. **Significance for Strategic Communicators:** How does this master narrative shed light on messaging opportunities and pitfalls?

4. **Significance for Analysts:** How can tracking this master narrative help analysts improve situational awareness, anticipate critical shifts in public debates, and better understand key influencers?
5. **Appendices:** The appendices for each master narrative highlight key phrases, symbols, or themes associated with the master narrative as well as relevant sourcing and validation. These appendices also provide detailed descriptions of each audience segment.

Research for this analysis included primary sources and open source research across a variety of fields, from historical and anthropological texts to news articles, speeches, and statements by key influencers in Somalia. In addition to this research, interviews with twenty-nine Somalia subject matter experts were used to surface master narratives, test hypotheses, and validate assertions. These experts were asked a combination of expansive, open-ended questions designed to surface new hypotheses as well as targeted questions designed to verify assertions. Combining these interviews with open source research, this report highlights how each master narrative reflects perceived history, themes, and objectives that are central to Somali identity.

This report is not a silver bullet: improving US messaging and analysis will continue to rely on the creativity and expertise of communicators and analysts confronted with complex mission goals, changing local conditions, and bureaucratic constraints. What this report can do is help communicators and analysts more effectively place themselves in the shoes of foreign audiences. For communicators, this means avoiding costly pitfalls while more easily crafting effective messaging that taps into themes that resonate with foreign audiences. For analysts, this means better understanding key influencers and their messages, as well as shifting internal and external political dynamics. Finally, this report is an analytic exercise to support decision makers, who can use master narratives to better anticipate how foreign actors and audiences will interpret USG policies and actions. The insights and analysis provided in this report serve as a first step in providing communicators and analysts with the resources they need to seize upon those opportunities and, in doing so, strengthen US understanding of foreign audiences.



# Master Narratives



# “The Foreign Oppressors”

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

- **Centralists**
- **Regionalists**
- **Somaliland Nationalists**

### Religious Groups

- **Salafi Islamists**
- **Sufi Islamists**
- **Moderate Islamists**

Somali aversion toward foreigners is widely held across all segments. Many Somalis have an inherent distrust of foreign people, ideas, and presence and often classify people and groups as “foreign” to disparage them, ranging from UN organizations to ethnic Somalis who grew up in the diaspora. Somalis with direct experience of foreign intervention (i.e. Somalis in the south who lived under control of Ethiopian forces) hold this narrative strongly.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: “THE FOREIGN OPPRESSORS”

**NARRATIVE:** From the beginning of Somali history, Somalis ran their own affairs, living in harmony under local political systems that provided stability and traditional law. This natural order was destroyed when the British, French, and Italian colonists divided the nation in the nineteenth century, installed their own forms of rule, and drew borders that served their colonial interests. The great Sayid Muhammad Abdulle Hasan tried to drive these oppressors out of Somalia, but their armies were too strong. Since then, foreigners have preyed on Somalia and plotted to steal its wealth. Ethiopia and Kenya send troops to occupy the country, America sends its Black Hawk helicopters, and foreign fishermen dump toxic waste into its waters. The United States and the aid lords from the United Nations oligarchy have only fueled more conflict under the guise of bringing peace to the nation, and their expensive but pointless conferences have done nothing but perpetuate the failure of the Somali state. Even Somalis abroad, with their foreign ideas and education, think they know what is best for Somalia. Today, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is nothing more than a UN front, and Somalis must drive out all foreign influences from the country and resist modern imperialism. A solution to Somalia’s problems can only come from within, using home-grown ideas to live in harmony and greater prosperity. Only then will Somalia be able to build a strong and stable government and a peaceful society.

ANALYSIS: This master narrative reflects the deep scars of Somalia's colonial history, which has instilled a widely held view that external powers in Somalia are motivated by greed and opportunism. The roots of this narrative date back to the late nineteenth century, when Dervish leader Sayid Muhammad Abdulle Hasan led Somalis in a fierce resistance against the European colonial powers, namely the British and Italians. Following Somalia's independence in the 1960s, this suspicion of colonial powers transferred to foreign actors in general. It includes non-Western countries, such as Ethiopia, who throughout the 1960s and 1970s launched overt or covert attacks on Somalia. This entrenched fear of foreign actors extended to opposition toward foreign ideas, as key influencers criticized the socialist dictator Siad Barre for being influenced by a foreign Soviet ideology. Since Barre's fall and the subsequent civil war, many Somalis blame foreign intervention as a cause of their failed state. The United States became vilified in this master narrative beginning in the 1990s, when the October 1993 Battle of Mogadishu (also known as Black Hawk Down or the Day of the Rangers) saw direct combat between US forces and Somali militias. Others argue that the boundaries and even the concept of modern Somalia are artificial colonial constructs that create conditions for violence and instability, further reinforcing anti-foreigner sentiments and undermining the credibility of national governance [see also: "Somalia of the People" and "National Unity"]. As a result, this narrative fuels conspiracy theories related to foreign interventionism and accusations that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and diaspora politicians are acting at the behest of foreign interests and powers such as the United Nations. Many Somalis describe the TFG as a front for the United Nations to advance the interest of Western funders. This antipathy toward foreigners also generates antagonism toward extremist groups viewed as introducing foreign concepts of political Islam, including Wahabism, into Somali society. Because this master narrative is broadly held, it is often deployed by key influencers to discredit their enemies.

A variety of key influencers use this master narrative in diverse ways. Political leaders use it to garner local support for their own views and to criticize the international community. In November 2011, Hawiye chief elder Mohamed Hassan Haad criticized a UN peace conference in Mogadishu: "What we are against are ideas brought to Somalia by foreigners. We emphasized earlier that foreign-imposed ideas will not be in the best interest of the Somali people and Somalia as a whole. ... [W]e sense a plot against the peace process in Somali; it is a conspiracy against Somalia's sovereignty. The UN conference aims at widening the rift between the Somali people."<sup>1</sup> Islamist leaders use this master narrative to attack competing groups. In March 2012, Abu Zubeyr, leader of Salafi extremist group Al-Shabaab, accused Turkey of "facilitating western government's plan to re-colonise Somalia."<sup>2</sup> This narrative is also used by other groups to criticize Al-Shabaab. At a rally protesting Al-Shabaab's merger with Al-Qa'ida, protestors pointed to Al-Shabaab's foreign connections saying, "Somalia is for Somalis, the land belongs to its natives, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qa'ida are enemies of the Somali people."<sup>3</sup> The Sufi paramilitary group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) also uses this narrative to attack Al-Shabaab saying, "the Wahabi faction has been supported from abroad and entrenched in its influence. ... [T]he Wahabi influence has been regarded as an alien religious influence with a solid foreign financial support, which contrasts with the traditionally oriented ASWJ."<sup>4</sup> The different and often competing uses of this narrative show its flexibility, as key influencers can readily tailor it to their political objectives.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

The United States is the contemporary paradigm of a foreign oppressor in the eyes of many subscribers to this master narrative, and the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu remains a symbol of perceived US aggression. This creates a potential pitfall for US communicators, who may need to seek indirect channels to deliver their messaging. US messaging supporting a particular group, strategy, or conference may undermine these efforts, as locals may view them as illegitimate because of their foreign sponsorship. Calls for any direct or indirect international involvement in Somali affairs will likely arouse hostility among subscribers, who may view them as a cover for nefarious motives, such as stealing Somalia’s natural resources. Subscribers to this master narrative may be receptive to messaging which encourages Somalis themselves to develop and spearhead political solutions. Additionally, subscribers to this master narrative who are naturally skeptical of US motives may be more receptive to foreign messaging in certain contexts, as shown through their reception of international aid during times of drought and famine.

This antipathy toward perceived foreign meddling, however, can also be turned against US adversaries. For example, exposing foreign influences and funding for Al-Shabaab may undermine their credibility with subscribers to this master narrative. Further, US messaging can highlight Al-Shabaab’s ties to the charcoal trade by arguing that, while Somali entrepreneurs bring wealth back into the country, Al-Shabaab relies on foreign funding while plundering Somalia’s natural resources for profit [see also: “Nation of Entrepreneurs”]. In February 2012, an unnamed US State Department Official was quoted by CNN saying that Al-Shabaab controls or taxes much of the charcoal trade in South and Central Somalia.<sup>5</sup> US communicators can also highlight Al-Shabaab’s merger with Al-Qa’ida, who many Somalis perceive as a foreign influence. Such messaging may undermine public support or credibility for Al-Shabaab.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS

This master narrative is a versatile weapon that competing actors deploy to discredit each other, and by tracking its use analysts can uncover political allegiances and conflicts. Some groups may deploy this narrative in a declaration of hostility against an otherwise neutral or friendly actor, such as a nonprofit group or another Muslim country. Other key influencers may use it to oppose certain policies or proposals, such as foreign-sponsored peace conferences. Certain groups such as Al-Shabaab may even use this narrative to discredit foreign humanitarian organizations. Analysts can track the different usages of this master narrative, as these may reveal what adversaries or enemies particular groups prioritize at any given moment.

Extremist groups may use this master narrative in their messaging to rally domestic support. Al-Shabaab uses this narrative against Ethiopia to gain support from southern Somalis who have historically been victims of Ethiopian oppression. They deploy this narrative against the United States, accusing them of being anti-Islamic and anti-Somali, and against other Muslim countries, such as Turkey. Al-Shabaab also uses this narrative to criticize Kenyan, Ethiopian, Ugandan, Burundian, and Djiboutian forces, claiming that they are sending troops to occupy and weaken the country. Even Turkey—whose most recent colonial involvement in the region dates back to the Ottoman era—has been the target of anti-foreigner Al-Shabaab messaging, demonstrating how expansively this master narrative can be applied to perceive enemies. Analysts can track the changing use of this narrative to assess whom Al-Shabaab and other Islamist groups view as their primary opponents. Thus, monitoring the changes in use of these narratives may shed light upon the shifting priorities and interests of Somalia’s Islamist groups.

# "Greater Somalia"

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

- Centralists
- Regionalists
- Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

- Salafi Islamists
- Sufi Islamists
- Moderate Islamists

This master narrative resonates with broad Somali audiences as it evokes feelings of deep national pride and exceptionalism. Subscribers to this master narrative focus on the Somali peoples' common culture, religion, and language and use these qualities as a basis for their call for a Somali nation that unites all ethnic Somalis under one flag.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: "GREATER SOMALIA"

**NARRATIVE:** Before the foreigners came, Somalis were one people with one language, one culture, and one religion, free to roam the vast Somali lands as they pleased. The Westerners came and divided the great nation, splitting the Somali people into Djibouti, Somaliland, Somalia, and the Somali-speaking regions in Ethiopia and Kenya. The colonial borders remained after the Westerners left, with the result that millions of Somali people still live under the control of neighboring states who oppress, abuse, and discriminate against them. Somalia has a duty to protect all Somalis, by force if necessary, and to free its brothers and sisters from the suffering they endure at the hands of foreign rulers. Just as the five points of the star adorning the Somali flag represent the five Somali regions, the Somali people must restore Somalia's proper boundaries as a single, unified state. Once the Somali nation is united, it will be a strong, powerful, peaceful country that can protect all ethnic Somalis and allow them to prosper. There is no better dream than one of *Somaliweyn* (Greater Somalia) where all Somalis are united under one flag.

**ANALYSIS:** This master narrative is central in Somali ethnic nationalism, with subscribers claiming much of the Horn of Africa for a united Somali state. It is also grounded in the common belief that ethnic Somalis deserve their own nation, and makes claims on Ethiopian and Kenyan territories inhabited by ethnic Somalis. Because this narrative is grounded in the notion of broad Somali unity, its prominence tends to coincide with periods of heightened Somali nationalism when the Somali government is stable. On several occasions, Somali leaders' invocation of this master narrative has been a precursor to armed conflict with Kenya or Ethiopia. In 1963, a surge in Somali nationalism led to the Shifta War in Kenya and Ogaden Uprising in Ethiopia. In the Ogaden War of 1977, the Somali National Army joined the Western Somali Liberation Front in a failed attempt to seize the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Though Somalia's attempts to acquire these areas failed, many Somalis still hold onto the belief that ethnic Somalis will one day be reunited under a single state. Instability in the wake of the 1991 civil war made this master narrative less appealing to many Somali audiences, as the prospect of a unified Greater Somalia seemed remote in a context of persistent disunity. The Ethiopian and Kenyan governments view this narrative as a security threat, and this has led some Somalis to believe that Ethiopia and Kenya intentionally keep Somalia divided to prevent future attempts to establish an ethnic Somali state.

A variety of key influencers, including clan leaders, politicians, military commanders, and religious leaders, use this master narrative in support of diverse political objectives. Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys, leader of the now defunct Islamic Courts Union (ICU), used this master narrative in 2006 to criticize Ethiopia, saying, "Ethiopia mistreats Somalis under its rule and the land it is occupying was given to them by Western colonialists" and threatened to seize the Somali region in Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup> Within a year, Ethiopian troops entered Somalia and drove out the ICU, causing it to split into several factions including several moderate groups and the extremist group Al-Shabaab. Abdul Karim Shaykh Musa Uthman, commander of the Ogaden National Liberation Front, declared in 2008, "Our aim is to liberate this people. We are defending them against Ethiopian attacks[;] ... we will liberate our people from the Ethiopian hegemony."<sup>2</sup> Key influencers in the Khaatumo State, a contested region in eastern Somaliland, use this master narrative to rally support against Somaliland Nationalists, claiming that the effort to create an internationally recognized independent Somaliland violates the ideals of Greater Somalia.<sup>3</sup> Though its use has changed over time, the "Greater Somalia" master narrative has proved resilient and will likely remain widely-held regardless of Somalia's political situation.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS**

Subscribers to this master narrative may interpret references to "the Somali people" to include not just those residing in Somalia, but all ethnic Somalis in the Horn of Africa. They may also view such references as implicit support for a unified pan-Somali state. Kenyan, Ethiopian, and Somaliland leaders could view such references as hostile to their interests. As a result, even seemingly benign statements referencing the Somali people could be misinterpreted by both domestic Somali and international audiences. Instead, to avoid provoking Somalia's neighbors and the leaders of Somaliland, communicators can address specific groups or regions in Somalia and focus on this master narrative's themes of national pride rather than themes of unification and the creation of a larger state. Communicators can also emphasize themes of Somali cultural pride and national identity to build rapport with Somali audiences.

Subscribers to this master narrative feel a strong sense of solidarity toward ethnic Somalis located in other regions of the Horn of Africa. This can have implications for US communicators making remarks on regional humanitarian issues such as refugee treatment in neighboring countries. Discussions of the alleged mistreatment of ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somaliland risk inflaming subscribers to “Greater Somalia,” who may invoke this master narrative to call for a diplomatic or even military intervention in defense of their ethnic kin.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

Ethnic Somali nationalism can be co-opted for wide ranging political aims, and this master narrative can be used to advance diverse ends. For example, Al-Shabaab has used this master narrative in association with anti-Kenyan or anti-Ethiopian messaging to attract supporters, particularly in the South. Use of this master narrative by ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya may instigate conflict or violence in ethnic Somali-inhabited regions. As a result, analysts can track increasing use of this narrative by groups in Kenya, Ethiopia, or Somalia as a leading indicator of heightened tensions.

Though “Greater Somalia” still resonates widely with Somali audiences, this master narrative’s influence in Somali public and political discourse is constrained by Somalia’s fragmented and unstable state. Calls for creating a “Greater Somalia” are unlikely to generate widespread waves of heightened ethnic nationalism so long as the country remains largely divided. One unintended consequence of greater stability inside Somalia may be a rise in ethnic nationalism, with a concurrent resurgence in use of the “Greater Somalia” narrative and its expansionist claims on Kenyan and Ethiopian territory. Tracking the use of this master narrative by key influencers within Somalia may provide analysts with an indicator of which groups are attempting to capitalize on greater internal stability in order to leverage ethnic nationalism for their own political ends.

# “Nation of Entrepreneurs”

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

- **Centralists**
- **Regionalists**
- **Somaliland Nationalists**

### Religious Groups

- **Salafi Islamists**
- **Sufi Islamists**
- **Moderate Islamists**

Broad Somali audiences express pride in an innate entrepreneurial spirit that has allowed Somalis to survive and even thrive despite persistent challenges and adversity. Many Somalis believe that this quality distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. Successful Somali entrepreneurs are most often located in the big cities: Mogadishu, Bosaaso, and Hargeisa. In addition, many Somali businesspeople leave Somalia for diaspora communities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Europe, and the United States. This master narrative is not as strongly held in parts of South and Central Somalia where agriculture is the main industry.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: “NATION OF ENTREPRENEURS”

**NARRATIVE:** From caravans taking frankincense and myrrh to the Egyptian Pharaohs, to the camel and sheep trade supplying the Arabian Gulf, Somalis have always been successful traders and entrepreneurs. In spite of this history, the socialist Barre regime foolishly controlled the economy and stifled the natural Somali spirit. The end of Barre’s corrupt regime should have allowed Somali businesspeople to flourish once again, but civil war and instability meant that businesses were not able to grow. Even during the throes of conflict, however, Somali entrepreneurs managed new achievements, such as deploying one of the best cell phone networks in all of Africa. Despite these successes, for the Somali business community to prosper there needs to be a form of government and rule of law that does not harm business people. Somali politicians need to stop arguing among themselves and blaming foreigners for Somalia’s problems; instead, they should form a government that can maintain peace, protect Somali businessmen, and connect Somalia’s economy to the rest of the world. When power seekers stop fighting and getting in the way of Somali businessmen, the entrepreneurial spirit of the Somali people will flourish and Somalia will finally prosper.

ANALYSIS: “Nation of Entrepreneurs” is a widely held master narrative that emphasizes the importance of economic stability and prosperity over ideological and political goals and asserts the benefits of Somalia interacting with the international business community. As a result, this master narrative’s positive view toward foreign businesspeople stands in contrast to the cynical view of foreigners reflected in the “Foreign Oppressors” master narrative. Despite this tension, both of these master narratives are widely held and often used by the same groups depending on the political situation. The belief that Somalis possess a natural business acumen stretches back to their role as trading partners for ancient Egyptian and Phoenician civilizations. In the colonial era Somalia became the meat supplier to British colonial outposts across the Gulf, and was referred to as “Aden’s Butcher Shop.”<sup>1</sup> Somalis have created a number of successful businesses. These include Dahabshiil, the largest money transfer business in Africa, which was founded by Somali entrepreneur Mohamed Said Duale in the 1970s. Many Somalis take pride in the fact that even during times of instability and conflict they have used their entrepreneurial abilities to their advantage. As described by Osman Sahardeed, a Somali emigrant to the United States who runs a translation service: “it is in our DNA to be entrepreneurial.”<sup>2</sup> Subscribers to this master narrative seek to establish a government that will be able to attract international investors and boost trade links, particularly with African neighbors, regional powers like Turkey, and the West.

Key influencers from multiple groups use this master narrative to improve their standing among the Somali economic elite and bolster their claims to political legitimacy. In February 2012, Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali appealed to Somali businesspeople when calling for support for the national government, saying, “Somalis are entrepreneurial people. They are very creative, and as soon as they get a little bit of normalcy and peace again, they are back to business.”<sup>3</sup> In a 2012 press release, Somaliland Representative for Sweden Eidarus Shaykh Adan said, “Somaliland people are entrepreneurs. ... [M]y vision for Somaliland is a land for knowledge and innovation. Therefore we need to start a process of engaging the whole nation in building a modern Somaliland which can compete with other nations. ... [W]e need a flying start to make Somaliland a country considered as one of the best countries in Africa.”<sup>4</sup> Because this narrative is widely held, key influencers who advocate a specific political vision for Somalia often articulate how their solutions will best serve commercial and business interests.

### SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

When compared to other widely-held master narratives in Somalia—“Foreign Oppressors” and “Greater Somalia”—this master narrative offers US communicators the greatest opportunity to demonstrate support for Somali development and alignment between US and Somali interests. US communicators could demonstrate their support for themes in the narrative by celebrating specific examples of successful Somali entrepreneurs. In addition, demonstrating the economic benefits from foreign trade may help counter the negative view of foreigners and the United States found in the “Foreign Oppressors” master narrative. For example, two Somali businesspeople, Nasra Weheliye Malin and Alhan Mohamed Jama, were invited to President Obama’s Entrepreneurial Summit in April 2012.<sup>5</sup> Also in this vein, in June 2011 the US Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Partnership for Economic Growth in Hargeisa to work with Somaliland to improve economic opportunities. Acting USAID East Africa Mission Director John Power stated, “We believe in the resiliency and the entrepreneurial spirit of the Somali people.”<sup>6</sup> Messaging and programs designed to acknowledge

and celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit reflected in this master narrative are likely to resonate across broad Somali audiences.

This master narrative can be used to appeal to multiple segments of Somali society that would normally be opposed to each other. Somali Regionalists may perceive direct appeals to Centralists as an indirect attack against their political goals and ideology. That same appeal could also alienate Somaliland Nationalists. Appealing to Somali pride in their entrepreneurial ability and business acumen offers an opportunity to appeal to multiple segments without alienating competing groups.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

The Somali business community is well-respected and politically powerful in Somalia, and tracking its opinions and actions could offer insights into domestic political dynamics. Tracking how key influencers use this master narrative could allow analysts to monitor which groups are trying to appeal to the Somali business community. In addition, tracking whether influential businesspeople within Somalia support centralism, decentralism, or separatism could provide analysts insight into which system is gaining traction in Somali political discourses. For example, businessmen may support a strong central government if it protects their interests against foreign involvement in Somalia, but if taxes or regulations become too strict, their allegiances could change. A noticeable shift in the business community's support for a particular political group may be an early indicator of rising political power and influence. Since entrepreneurs are celebrated in Somalia, they often become politicians. Analysts may be able to track use of this master narrative by specific businesspeople to anticipate better who will make up the next generation of political leaders. If new key influencers are mentioned repeatedly in the context of this master narrative's long history of Somali entrepreneurship, it could be an indicator of their growing political influence.

# “Somalia of the People”

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

Centralists

#### ➤ Regionalists

Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

Salafi Islamists

#### ➤ Sufi Islamists

Moderate Islamists

Regionalists and Sufi Islamists support the formation of a decentralized (federal) government structure. This narrative is widely held across regions in Somalia except in Somaliland, Mogadishu, and areas controlled by Al-Shabaab or the TFG. Members of the Regionalist audience segment generally belong to dominant clans in Puntland, Galmudug, and South and Central Somalia, and to minority clans in eastern Somaliland.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Sufi Islamist audience segment mostly reside in the areas of Central Somalia controlled by Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah (ASWJ). Members of ASWJ generally belong to the Hawiye clan. Despite the deeply-engrained nature of clan identity in Somali society, using clan as a lens for segmenting Somali audiences can be problematic, as clan identities are often fluid or volatile as Somali key influencers leverage clan identity to advance political goals.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: “SOMALIA OF THE PEOPLE”

**NARRATIVE:** Somalia was once a prosperous land whose clan-based society enjoyed peace and stability. There was no central government, and each Somali was his own Sultan, thriving in a nomadic way of life. Then European colonialists imposed their alien beliefs and destroyed Somali traditions. Ever since, Somalis have suffered under numerous failed governments, from the dictator Siad Barre to the corrupt Transitional Federal Government. The latest government run by the United Nations is no different, as its corrupt officials loot the peoples’ wealth to pay their mortgages on homes in the West. A central government will never be able to provide for the strong and independent Somalis. The only hope for Somalis is to return to a democratic regional structure based on Somali tradition, allowing local leaders to build governments that control their own affairs. This is the only political system that will ever work for the Somali people. It will give all Somalis a voice, helping Somalia drive out corruption and bring stability. Empowering the local people to establish their own regional governments will allow Somalis to prosper in a traditional system of peace and harmony.

ANALYSIS: Subscribers to “Somalia of the People” support the establishment of a loose confederation of regional governments within a united national state. They also largely belong to clans who benefit, or are likely to benefit, from a national governance structure affording expanded autonomy to regional governments. By contrast, members of subordinated clans within these regions generally reject this narrative. With decentralized, regional authority at the core of this narrative for both Regionalists and Sufi Islamists, subscribers believe that political centralization equals dominance by specific groups or clans, to the detriment of all others. This strong rejection of centralization puts this master narrative at odds with the “National Unity” master narrative, which advocates for strong central government. As a result, subscribers to this master narrative are generally dismissive of or antagonistic toward the TFG, most of whose officials are based in Nairobi. Because of the sensitivity created by historical inter-clan tensions, most Somalis do not use clans in their overt political rhetoric. Instead, this master narrative offers many key influencers a more politically palatable way to advocate for augmenting their clan’s power, since this is a natural result of decentralization in Somalia’s clan-based socio-political environment. These key influencers pay lip service to benefits of regionalism such as protection from corrupt central government leaders, better social services, and increased economic opportunities, but many of these key influencers are more motivated by attempting to increase their clan’s power and resources.<sup>2</sup>

Most key influencers using this master narrative belong to dominant clans in regions with established or emerging regional government structures. These key influencers use this master narrative to justify their support for regionalism, but often seek privileges and protection for their clans’ interests. At the Somalia National Constitutional Conference in February 2012, Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole expressed his support for regionalism, saying, “Gone are the days when power and resource [sic] was unfairly concentrated in a single city-state. Expectedly, when Somalia’s central government collapsed in 1991, the nation-state collapsed with the fall of Mogadishu—a city-state under successive administrations since independence. This historic disaster should never be repeated and the Somali federation should provide space for political stability and economic development at the local and state levels, to ensure sustainable stability even if the center is threatened or falls. This is how government is managed—at the local level where people play the most important role and can solve and manage their own affairs.”<sup>3</sup> Key influencers in the Ximan and Xeeb Administration in Central Somalia, such as its President Mohamed Abdullahi Aden “Tiiceey,” use this master narrative to justify the creation of their own regional government, pointing to increased security through fighting pirates and driving out Al-Shabaab.<sup>4</sup>

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

Subscribers to this master narrative will likely be skeptical or hostile toward US messaging that proposes a stronger central government. At best, they will likely regard such advocacy as naïve in the face of Somalia’s political realities, and at worst they could view such declarations as an attack on their clan. Subscribers often criticize the international community for supporting the TFG and other centralized governments before it, and view these political structures as ineffective.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, audiences are likely to be receptive to messaging praising the efforts and progress made by regional administrations toward political stability. For instance, in September 2010 US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson complimented the Puntland and Somaliland governments: “We think that both of these parts of Somalia have been zones of relative political and civil stability, and we think they will, in fact, be a bulwark against extremism and radicalism that might emerge from the South.”<sup>6</sup>

Another potential pitfall for communicators who invoke this master narrative is the possibility of inadvertently supporting particular clans or clan alliances by praising the actions or aspirations of their respective regions. For example, praise of the Puntland government for its success in establishing order and stability in the region may be viewed as praise for the Majerten Darod sub-clan, which dominates Puntland’s government. Other clans in this area, such as members of the Leelkase or Warsangeli Darod sub-clans may therefore feel marginalized or offended. Given this dynamic, US communicators may be better-equipped to tailor messaging to regional audiences if they take into account the potential clan dynamics associated with messaging that refers to a particular region, but communicators should be aware that Somalis may perceive such messaging as a sign of favoritism. Messaging that appears to influence or favor one clan over another could result in exacerbating volatile inter-clan rivalries.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

This master narrative could be used to anticipate inter-clan conflict, as calls for decentralization of power will likely create tensions between clans as they compete for control over local resources and political authority. Of particular significance are groups or key influencers that had been advocating centralism but then switch to advocating regionalism. This could be interpreted as the beginning of a grab for local power and influence by competing clans. Such a switch would be particularly significant in Mogadishu and areas controlled by the TFG, as it could be taken by other groups as a *de facto* abandonment of the concept of centralized government. For example, at the Garoowe Conference in Puntland in February 2012, Somalia’s President Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmed agreed to a framework supporting a federal structure to replace the TFG. Analysts can monitor subscribers’ reactions to this type of transition for signs of conflict as local clans negotiate for control of the capital.

Because leaders of the dominant clan in a region use this narrative, analysts can monitor its use to identify rising local leaders. Clan leaders who begin to deploy this narrative are likely making a public bid for support, and this may indicate increasing power and influence for such individuals. At the same time, key influencers supporting the “Somalia of the People” master narrative may quickly abandon their commitment to regionalism if it is politically expedient; the same key influencers who endorse “Somalia of the People” may switch to promoting a strong centralized government should they lose political power or control over a particular region’s resources. As a result, consistent use of this master narrative by key influencers may not reflect a genuine advocacy for increased regional autonomy, but rather a political calculation of the benefits of publicly supporting the concept.

# “National Unity”

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

#### ➤ Centralists

Regionalists

Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

Salafi Islamists

Sufi Islamists

#### ➤ Moderate Islamists

The reunification of Somalia and the establishment of a strong central government is a goal shared by Centralists and Moderate Islamists, though their political motivations differ. Centralists make up a large portion of Somalia’s educated and political elites, especially among the TFG. Similarly, Moderate Islamists are often members of the educated and political elite, especially in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. Members of these segments include religious groups like Al-Islah and clans like the Hawiye.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: “NATIONAL UNITY”

**NARRATIVE:** When Somalia won its independence in 1960, many had high hopes for a strong government and national unity. The first governments replaced traditional forms of rule, based on clans and local laws, with a modern political structure. This collapsed when the corrupt and greedy Siad Barre came to power, turning the hope of a modern Somalia into a system designed to enrich his family and clan. When this regime fell, Somalia spiraled deeper into violence and clan-based strife. Years of incompetent governments and failed peace conferences have led the people to despair, but Somalia must not give up hope for an effective central government. The traitors in Somaliland and those who speak of so-called federalism are threats to rightful Somali land and unity. A divided Somalia will inevitably result in painful violence, continued meddling by Kenya and Ethiopia, and the domination of clan politics. Somalis must put aside their differences and come together to support a strong national Somali government in order to maintain stability and develop economically. With a strong and just central government, Somalia will be free from the chaos and shame of civil war and the meddling of outsiders.

ANALYSIS: This master narrative reflects two prevalent visions of Somali national unity: a Centralist interpretation that focuses strictly on political governance, and a Moderate Islamist interpretation that places this potential political progress in the context of Islamic government. With reunification and centralized authority at the heart of this master narrative for both Centralists and Moderate Islamists, they view political decentralization or regional independence as dooming Somalia to perpetual instability and violence. For subscribers to this master narrative, decentralization would only lead to inter-clan conflict, weakening all parties and making them incapable of rule. This vehement rejection of decentralization places this master narrative at odds with the "Somalia of the People" master narrative, which calls for greater regional power and autonomy. In addition, subscribers to this master narrative may also vacillate between emphasizing the importance of this master narrative and the "Greater Somalia" master narrative. Unlike "National Unity" which seeks to unite Somalia's current regions under a strong central government, "Greater Somalia" emphasizes the importance of reuniting all of the ethnic Somali regions in the Horn of Africa. Further, this master narrative often reinforces persistent skepticism toward Kenya and Ethiopia: according to subscribers to this master narrative, the destabilizing impact of decentralization or federalism would invite these regional powers to exploit Somalia's resources.

Key influencers frequently invoke this master narrative to emphasize the need for a strong, centralized Somalia, and to present themselves as the unifiers of the country. This master narrative often manifests itself in the form of calls for national unity tailored to the particular key influencer's political goals or ambitions. In April 2012, former Somali Minister of Education Abdinur Mohamud asserted that "this balkanization of Somalia into mini-states has the potential to spark new clan-based wars and prolong the Somali conflict. Additionally, fearful that a strong Somalia could stir up political mischief in their own fragile and ethnically complex societies, Somalia's neighbors take every opportunity to promote the fragmentation of Somalia into weaker regions."<sup>1</sup> In February 2012, *Somalia Report* announced that a group of Moderate Islamists formerly of the TFG came together to form the Midnimo (Unity) party. Its chairman Shaykh Umar Dahir Abdirahman Muhamed said, "the aim of the party is to work closely to bring together and reunite Somali people."<sup>2</sup> He asserted that his political party will be part of the new strong central government that will succeed the TFG. Centralists and Moderate Islamists both believe in the need for a strong central government. However, Moderate Islamists add a religious dimension to this political argument, saying that Somali Muslims should unite because of their common religion. One of the leaders of Al-Islah, the Muslim Brotherhood's Somali branch, asserted in July 2011 that in order for the Somali state to recover it needs a "national civic movement ... that invigorates the concepts of citizenship and democratic governance on the one side and accommodates Islam ... on the other."<sup>3</sup> In this context, the leader of Al-Islah is using this master narrative in conjunction with religious beliefs in order to broaden his organization's appeal.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS**

Emphasizing the need for good governance and competence in a central Somali government may appeal to subscribers to this master narrative. Centralists and Moderate Islamists both agree that previous attempts at centralized Somali government failed because of endemic corruption and clan favoritism. To demonstrate US support for good governance, US communicators can emphasize that previous failures of centralized government in Somalia were not due to systemic issues, but problems with those specific governments. However, such messaging

may alienate subscribers to “Somalia of the People,” who may view support for centralized governance as simply an attempt to favor certain clans. US communicators may be able to strike a balance between these two competing master narratives by emphasizing the importance of equitable representation of the regions in a centralized government.

Subscribers to this master narrative are opposed to decentralization for two reasons: it could limit their political power, and they believe it would destabilize Somalia. As a result, subscribers may view praise of federalism—which they equate with decentralization—as an attempt to perpetuate regional conflict and instability. Subscribers may also react negatively to praise for the relative stability or prosperity of Somaliland, especially if contrasted with the instability of South and Central Somalia. Subscribers could interpret such messaging as part of continued attempts to keep Somalia weak and divided.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

Support for this master narrative frequently coincides with support for centralizing governance. Specific clans support a strong central government because they may not have a geographically concentrated base of support that would allow them to dominate a region in a decentralized system. Political parties support a strong central government because they feel they will benefit from it. However, both groups may change their support for a strong central government if they feel they would begin to benefit more under a regional system. Analysts can track how key influencers vacillate between invoking the “National Unity” and “Somalia of the People” master narratives as a reflection of political shifts between supporting or not supporting centralized governance, respectively. Should such a switch occur rapidly, it may indicate the start of a regional power grab between competing key influencers or clans.

Use of this master narrative by religious groups could indicate an attempt to broaden their appeal beyond their sectarian base. Messaging that focuses on this master narrative could be used to position Islamist groups as politically moderate to maximize their appeal, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of Islam in any government. Such a messaging strategy would likely appeal to subscribers to this master narrative as well as those who feel Islam has an important role to play in government. While Moderate Islamist groups like Al-Islah are most likely to use the master narrative in this fashion, there is a minority faction within Al-Shabaab which rejects international jihad and argues that Al-Shabaab should be a purely nationalist movement, focused on establishing a strong, centralized Islamic government within Somalia. The increasing use of this narrative by members of Al-Shabaab could indicate an emergent fissure within the group and a potential rejection of internationalist aims.

# “The Political Widow”

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

Centralists

Regionalists

### ➤ Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

Salafi Islamists

Sufi Islamists

Moderate Islamists

This master narrative resonates with Somaliland Nationalists who believe Somaliland should receive international recognition as an independent country. They are primarily members of the Isaq clan, the dominant clan within Somaliland. However, not all residents of Somaliland embrace this master narrative or identify themselves as Somalilanders, particularly members of minority clans who resent perceived Isaq dominance of the local political system.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: “THE POLITICAL WIDOW”

**NARRATIVE:** Somaliland prospered under the British Protectorate, governing itself according to its own culture and traditions until its independence in 1960. But after leaders of the Somali National League joined Somaliland with Italian Somalia, the government in Mogadishu oppressed Somalilanders, discriminating against them and pushing them out of government. When Somalilanders protested, the Barre regime sent airplanes and soldiers to massacre the people. After the 1991 civil war, Somaliland reclaimed its independence as southern Somalia dissolved into chaos. Yet other nations refused to recognize Somaliland, ignoring the fact that Somaliland had been free once before, and leaving her a political widow to a failed state. Despite the chaos in the south and lack of international support, Somaliland has repaired itself, forming a stable society and democratic government—distinct from the rebels, warlords, and pirates that rule Somalia. Somaliland must reclaim the independence declared in 1960. Just as Senegal and Gambia were once united and then separated, Somaliland and Somalia must also dissolve their failed union. All countries must recognize Somaliland as a rightful independent nation. Once recognized, Somalilanders will enjoy the right to run their own affairs as all independent people should. Somaliland will be able to attract foreign investment, strengthen its democracy, and show the world how strong the nation of Somaliland can be.

ANALYSIS: “The Political Widow” master narrative emerged after Somalia’s civil war and subsequent instability, a context in which Somaliland’s relative stability gave rise to themes of Somaliland nationalism, pride, and exceptionalism. At the May 1991 Burco conference, clan leaders and the Somali National Movement declared Somaliland’s independence from Somalia, arguing that the union between Somalia and Somaliland had failed. Since 1991, subscribers to this master narrative have rejected all forms of Somali nationalism, demanding that the international community recognize Somaliland’s sovereignty. As reflected in this master narrative, these advocates for independence highlight Somaliland’s former independence as its own nation based on colonial borders as the main justification for international recognition, but also justify their claims by contrasting the relative stability of Somaliland with persistent violence in Somalia. This master narrative reflects a sense of Somaliland exceptionalism leading subscribers to resent comparisons to other nominally independent regions in Somalia, such as Puntland. Subscribers reject the “Greater Somalia” master narrative, viewing the civil war in 1991 and subsequent instability as proof that while uniting the Somali peoples may be an attractive dream, it is not feasible in reality. Though this master narrative is deeply held by Somaliland Nationalists, not all residents of Somaliland subscribe to it. Members of minority clans of the disputed Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn region (the Khaatumo State as of March 2012) view Somaliland’s reasons for independence as an illegitimate excuse for the Isaq clan to dominate the region.<sup>1</sup> Many in southern Somalia do not support Somaliland’s independence either, claiming that an independent Somaliland will threaten Somalia’s stability. These tensions have often resulted in violent clashes, which could escalate if Somaliland receives international recognition.

Key influencers in Somaliland use this master narrative both internationally to appeal to the international community for recognition, and domestically to generate broad support for their political position. In 2000, former Somaliland Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Nur Fagadhe commented that Somaliland “should be recognized as a separate entity instead of slumping it together with the rest of Somalia whose newly-elected government in Djibouti could not carry out any work or go to Somalia.”<sup>2</sup> Key influencers also emphasize Somaliland’s political and economic accomplishments as reasons for complete separation from Somalia. In a 2012 interview, Somaliland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Abdullahi Omar stated, “We have rebuilt our country that had been completely destroyed. We have given it institutions that are functioning and we have earned the respect of the outside world. ... We still need patience as far as recognition is concerned, but we have made energetic moves in the right direction and will continue to do this.”<sup>3</sup> Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamud Silanyo asserts that Somalia and Somaliland must “live as two neighbors, brotherly and peaceful nations” since all attempts at uniting the two regions have failed.<sup>4</sup> Although key influencers use this narrative to emphasize the theme of Somaliland exceptionalism, to date they have had little success in getting the international community to acknowledge they have a valid claim to national recognition.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

Because of the ongoing political conflict between Somaliland and Somalia, messaging related to Somaliland presents a pitfall to US communicators; any messaging that will be received positively inside Somaliland could offend large segments of the population inside Somalia proper. For example, acknowledging Somaliland’s success in creating a relatively stable government in the face of hardship and struggle would likely appeal to subscribers. Audiences inside Somalia, however, may view such praise as a covert attack on their ambitions to keep Somalia

united. US communicators may be able to navigate these tensions better by focusing messaging on themes and goals that are shared across Somalia and Somaliland. For instance, this could be accomplished through messaging that leverages the “Nation of Entrepreneurs” master narrative, as many people in both Somaliland and Somalia believe in their exceptional commercial prowess. As a result, both groups may be responsive to messaging that includes themes such as the need for stability to enable economic and commercial development.

This master narrative is the foundation for a deep sense of Somaliland exceptionalism, which in turn is the basis of their claims to be a separate nation. Any messaging that implies Somaliland should remain part of Somalia will appear to subscribers to be a dismissal of what makes Somaliland truly unique. Similarly, comparing Somaliland with other sub-regions of Somalia, especially Puntland, will be viewed as an attack on Somaliland’s exceptionalism. Because the Somaliland government does not recognize the dissenters in eastern Somaliland, they will likely meet any messaging mentioning the Khaatumo State with hostility.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

There is a fundamental tension between the aims of subscribers to this master narrative and those of subscribers to the “Somalia of the People” and “National Unity” master narratives. Most Somalilanders want international recognition of their independence, while key influencers inside Somalia want Somaliland to remain part of a Somali state. Both sides view this as a zero-sum game, and may meet the other side’s claims with hostile rhetoric and even violence. They may also actively lobby against each other in international forums or in state-to-state dialogues. Analysts can monitor the extent to which these competing narratives are echoed in statements from regional and international actors; should “The Political Widow” become more prominent in such messaging, it could act as a precursor to heightened tensions or outbursts of conflict between Somaliland and Somalia.

Potential conflict with Somaliland Nationalists may also occur among Somalilanders, as minority clans in the region protest the Somaliland government. Key influencers may use this master narrative to call for violence against groups within Somaliland they perceive as seeking to limit Somaliland’s independence, classifying these groups as rebels and threats to peace in Somaliland.<sup>5</sup> Analysts can monitor the relative strength of “The Political Widow” versus competing narratives in contested regions. A rise in key influencer references to the “Somalia of the People” master narrative in eastern Somaliland may indicate reduced support for the Somaliland government. One possible implication could be the defection of soldiers from the Somaliland government to the Khaatumo State.<sup>6</sup>

# "Jihad Against the Apostates"

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

Centralists  
Regionalists  
Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

➤ **Salafi Islamists**  
Sufi Islamists  
Moderate Islamists

Salafi Islamists are drawn to this master narrative because it emphasizes governing Somalia according to their interpretation of Islamic law. Though proponents of this master narrative claim it has broad support, it appeals mainly to Somalis located in the South and Central region, specifically in the regions of the Jubbas, Lower Shabeelle, and Gedo. Most members of this segment are members of the Darod and Rahanweyn clan families; primarily they live in areas controlled by Salafi Islamist groups like Al-Shabaab.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: "JIHAD AGAINST THE APOSTATES"

**NARRATIVE:** The Salaf, the companions and followers of the Prophet, practiced the purest form of Islam, and in the time of Muhammad a group of them migrated to Abyssinia, bringing Islam to Somalia. Over time, however, Islam in Somalia became corrupted. Sufi heretics practiced idolatry, ancestor worship, and other acts of *shirk* (polytheism), spreading their corruption throughout society. In the absence of true Islam, the dictator Siad Barre instituted a godless regime, guided by atheists and foreigners. After Barre fell, God punished Somali apostasy with a bitter civil war that tore the country apart. The Christians from Kenya and Ethiopia attacked Somalia and tried to destroy Islam. To restore the Islam of the Salaf, Somalis must wage jihad to rid their land of foreign and Christian influence, revive the Islamic caliphate in Somalia, and unite the Somali mujahidin under one leadership. They must slaughter the apostates, the hypocrites, and the pagans. By returning to the pure form of Islam, Somalis will be able to break down the barriers that divide them and bring justice and stability to their country.

ANALYSIS: Subscribers to this master narrative broadly see themselves as defenders of proper Islamic practice in Somalia, and employ rhetoric that rejects both perceived Christian influence in Somalia as well as Somali Sufism. These anti-Sufi sentiments put this master narrative directly at odds with the Sufi “Return of the Tariqas” master narrative, and tensions between Salafi ideology and Somalia’s deep Sufi heritage acts as an entrenched socio-political source of conflict in Somalia. Relative to Somalia’s Sufi heritage, however, this narrative does not have deep historical roots in Somali society. Rather, it emerged during the civil war following Siad Barre’s rule and achieved prominence in the mid-2000s with the rise of the Islamic Courts Union. Politically, this narrative serves as a foundation upon which various Salafi groups build messaging tailored to their own distinct political objectives and missions—messaging which is often highly divisive. For example, Al-Shabaab factions focused on an international jihadi mission began tailoring this master narrative to accommodate a global jihadist effort beginning in 2008 with the rise of Abu-Zubeyr (a.k.a. Ahmed Abdi Aw Mohamed Godane). Al-Shabaab’s subsequent 2012 merger with Al-Qa’ida further reflected a shift in political focus among its leadership from the nationalist goal of establishing a Greater Somalia to international jihad.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, Al-Shabaab’s leadership invokes “Jihad Against the Apostates” in combination with international Salafi master narratives in an attempt to reconcile internationalist goals with domestic audiences [see: “Agents of the West” and “Restoring of the Caliphate” in the Special Report on Al-Qa’ida].<sup>2</sup> Salafi groups such as Hisbul Islam (which merged with Al-Shabaab in 2010), on the other hand, made use of the Salafi ideology reflected in this master narrative without reference to a broader international agenda.<sup>3</sup>

Key influencers invoke this narrative to promote Salafi ideology and attract young Somalis who may be attracted to promises of justice and stability, and Al-Shabaab leaders routinely make use of this narrative in their own messaging. In a March 2012 speech on *Radio Andalus*, Abu-Zubeyr referred to the secular government of Puntland as “apostate,” and said that mujahidin must fight to “ensure the Islamic flag flies over the whole region.”<sup>4</sup> Former Hisbul Islam leader Shaykh Hassan Dahir Aweys similarly described his organization’s merger with Al-Shabaab as an effort “to continue to strongly fight the infidels who have invaded our country.”<sup>5</sup> Salafis also use this master narrative to attack Sufis, such as when Al-Shabaab official Ali Mohamed Hussein described Sufi practices as “shirk and impermissible in Islam” in a March 2010 statement.<sup>6</sup> Key influencers use this master narrative to increase their profile among Somalis, undermine competing master narratives, and expand their political power.

### SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

Subscribers to this master narrative are unlikely to be responsive to US messaging in general, as this master narrative leads them to view the United States as part of a broader set of enemies of Somalia and of Salafi religious beliefs. US communicators may be able to undermine Salafi messaging, however, by appealing to Somalis’ historical distrust of foreign religious or political influence in Somalia. Many Somalis assert that Sufism is the indigenous manifestation of Islam and that other interpretations are foreign and hence illegitimate. Drawing attention to this master narrative’s criticisms of traditional Somali Sufi Islam could discredit Salafis in the eyes of Somalis who hold the “Return of the Tariqas” or “Foreign Oppressors” master narratives. In addition to the organization’s ideological opposition to Sufism, Al-Shabaab may present a particular opportunity for communicators, as Al-Shabaab becomes closer to Al-Qa’ida, more foreigners have come to Somalia and committed atrocities against Somalis. By highlighting Al-Shabaab’s merger with Al-Qa’ida, US messaging could emphasize that both Al-Shabaab and Al-Qa’ida are foreign organizations exerting their will on the Somali people.

Since one of this master narrative's major draws is its promise of political and social stability, US communicators may be able to appeal to holders of the "Nation of Entrepreneurs" narrative by highlighting the historical instability caused by Salafi groups in Somalia. Those most interested in stability and economic growth in Somalia will likely view this master narrative's calls for violence and vehement rejection of international engagement as a liability for the whole country. US messaging that emphasizes Salafi rejection of conditions that would facilitate economic growth can further underscore this. Communicators could point to Mogadishu, which experienced considerable economic growth after the expulsion of Al-Shabaab. They can also note that it is in fact groups like Al-Shabaab that destroy the stability they claim to offer, harming the interests of the business community.

### **SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS**

Tracking the spread of particular interpretations of this master narrative could provide insight into the influence of various Salafi Islamist factions among the Somali diaspora. The differences between these interpretations could be especially useful given that ideological and political differences between Salafi factions can precipitate intergroup conflict and internal schisms within Salafi groups. For example, the prevalence of an internationalist interpretation of this master narrative in the Horn of Africa could signal expanded ideological influence by Al-Shabaab, particularly in Ethiopia or Kenya. In January 2012, Shaykh Ahmad Iman Ali addressed Kenyan Muslims in Swahili, saying that "every Muslim must take a role" in the defense of Somalia.<sup>7</sup> This represents an attempt on the part of Al-Shabaab's leadership to reach out to the Somali Diaspora and involve them in the jihad.

Tracking the rise of domestic variants of this master narrative in the Salafi Islamist movement could also help analysts predict the emergence of new Salafi organizations. Within the Salafi Islamist movement, there are those with varying interpretations on the religious and political objectives of this master narrative who may seek to establish new organizations. While Al-Shabaab is currently the dominant Salafi Islamist group in Somalia, its political shift to an internationalist organization could inspire a backlash within this audience segment, as some adherents have focused almost exclusively on achieving their goals within Somalia, rather than internationally. For example, up until 2009, Hisbul Islam was a Salafi Islamist group competing against Al-Shabaab. It primarily focused on establishing an Islamic state in Somalia and disagreed with the goal of creating a global Islamic caliphate.

# "Return of the Tariqas"

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

### Political Groups

Centralists  
Regionalists  
Somaliland Nationalists

### Religious Groups

Salafi Islamists  
➤ Sufi Islamists  
Moderate Islamists

Sufism and its role in traditional Somali society appeal primarily to Sufi Islamists. All ethnic Somalis are historically Sufi; however, today many Somalis no longer practice Sufism. At the same time, Somalis still identify strongly with Sufi traditions as an indistinguishable part of Islam and what it means to be Somali. This audience segment includes older Somalis who still have a living memory of Sufism in Somalia, but the primary representative of Sufi Islamists is the ASWJ. The ASWJ is a clan-based alliance located in South and Central Somalia and Galmudug and controlled by sub-clans from the Hawiye and Darod clans.

## MASTER NARRATIVE: "RETURN OF THE TARIQAS"

**NARRATIVE:** Somalia once enjoyed an unbroken tradition of peaceful and tolerant Sufi Islam. The Sufi *tariqas* (religious orders) worked with clan elders to resolve conflicts and provide education and stability. Sufi religious leaders such as the great Mohamed Abdullah Hassan of the Salihyah *tariqa* defended the people against colonial invaders and established the Dervish State in the early twentieth century. After the colonists first disrupted this traditional order, the dictator Siad Barre continued its destruction by trying to establish a misbegotten system of "scientific socialism." This attempt failed, and when the Barre regime collapsed, his legacy was a society whose traditions had disappeared. In the chaos following the 1991 civil war, various groups—some following foreign ideologies—fought for control. Al-Shabaab, the worst of these groups, assassinated clerics, desecrated Sufi graves, and closed mosques. To end conflict in Somalia, local leaders need to restore the *tariqas* and follow the leadership and guidance of the Sufi elders. Warriors must fight against Salafi groups and their foreign Wahabi ideology and drive them from Somalia. Once the local traditions have been restored, Somalis can reestablish rule by their native tradition of tolerant and peaceful Islam that served them for centuries.

ANALYSIS: "Return of the Tariqas" is the second of two master narratives that focus on what subscribers view as the "correct" role of Islam in Somali society and governance [see: "Jihad against the Apostates"]. Subscribers believe that the collapse of Sufi traditions is the cause of conflict and instability in Somalia; therefore, they call for the restoration of a traditional Somali political and theological order based on historical religious and political constructs like Sufi *tariqas* and the clan system. Key influencers deploying this narrative celebrate Sufi traditions in an effort both to encourage stability in Somalia and to strengthen their own political power. In order to emphasize the role that Sufis have played in defending Somalia, subscribers often refer to Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, an early twentieth century Somali national hero who defended Somalia against colonialism and established the Sufi "Dervish State." This master narrative's promotion of Sufi Islam puts it in direct opposition to the "Jihad Against the Apostates" master narrative, which seeks to eliminate Sufism. In political rhetoric and discourse, this conflict frequently manifests itself in Sufi Islamist messaging that characterizes Salafis as Wahabis in an effort to depict Salafism as a foreign (i.e., Saudi) ideology. In addition, this tension also leads to armed conflicts between Al-Shabaab and ASWJ, which have persisted since mid-2008.<sup>1</sup>

Key influencers from ASWJ and the TFG use this master narrative in conjunction with the "Foreign Oppressors" master narrative to emphasize the indigenous nature of their ideology and undermine the competing "Jihad Against the Apostates" master narrative. In March of 2011, Nor Wayah, a senior military official in the TFG asserted in an interview with *Somalia Report* that Al-Shabaab's "extremism is neither our culture nor our religion, but a fake ideology from the Arabian Peninsula."<sup>2</sup> ASWJ says that Salafis are "an alien religious influence with solid foreign financial support," and goes on to emphasize that the ASWJ has been fighting for "the bedrock of the Somali culture and the regional clan network."<sup>3</sup> At a rally against Al-Shabaab's merger with Al-Qa'ida, senior ASWJ official Shaykh Abdikadir Somow said that "a stolen camel can never have a legitimate offspring," implying that only indigenous political and religious structures can command legitimate influence in Somalia.<sup>4</sup> Key influencers use this master narrative to undermine their opponents, and in particular to attack Salafis.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

Although this narrative is in direct opposition to Salafi groups, and in particular Al-Shabaab, its use in US messaging presents certain pitfalls. Subscribers to this master narrative are opposed to Salafism and the "Jihad against the Apostates" master narrative, but US communicators should be aware that they are not necessarily supporters of democracy or Western regional objectives. Subscribers are likely to welcome financial or military alliances with the United States to help them in their fight against Al-Shabaab. Many among these same audiences, however, also subscribe to the "Foreign Oppressors" master narrative, which may lead them to be generally suspicious of foreign messaging.

Since this master narrative is strongly associated with ASWJ, US messaging drawing on this master narrative could be interpreted by Somali audiences as constituting tacit support for ASWJ's political agenda. As a result, while this master narrative may point to opportunities to criticize or undermine Al-Shabaab, direct references to it also come with political risks for US communicators. The narrative seeks to reestablish the power of the clan system, and while many Somalis support traditional structures as a means to restore stability and rein in wayward youth, many also openly criticize clan-based politics. Many Somalis see ASWJ as a clan alliance seeking to cement the power base of a few Somali sub-clans. As a result, US messaging that appears to support this master narrative could alienate clans that stand to lose if ASWJ comes to power, such as members of the Rahanweyn, Dir, and Isaq clans.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR ANALYSTS

Al-Shabaab and ASWJ compete over many of the same Somali districts and towns, and by tracking the use of this master narrative in those areas, analysts could gain insight into which organization is winning the ideological war over religion in Somalia. While the "Jihad Against the Apostates" master narrative has been able to attract young Somalis, mostly older members of the Somali population subscribe to "Return of the Tariqas." Increasing use of this master narrative by the young, or by key influencers that frequently address youth audiences, could indicate growing strength and influence for ASWJ.

While this master narrative is the overarching narrative of ASWJ and has deep historical roots in Somalia, it is dormant among the majority of Somalis—i.e., it is not a prevalent fixture of regular discourse among most Somalis. However, political groups could use this narrative in conjunction with other master narratives in order to broaden their appeal [see: "Somalia of the People" and "National Unity"]. Analysts could track the use of this master narrative by key clans and political groups to see which are trying to broaden their power base. In particular, clans like the Isaq, Darod, and Hawiye may either begin to use or increase their use of this master narrative because they are the more powerful clans in Somalia, and embracing the clan system would benefit them most.



# Appendix & Sourcing



# Somalia Audience Segmentation

A variety of factors make it difficult to precisely assess Somalia's political and social demography. Poor infrastructure and a lack of effective central governance since 1991 mean that social statistics of all sorts are often unavailable or unreliable. Furthermore, the Somali clan system is highly fluid, with frequent changes of allegiance depending on shifting goals and priorities for individual clans and sub-clans. The following six groups represent key audience segments that have endured since the early 1990s, even as individuals and clans have regularly switched between them.

## POLITICAL GROUPS

### Centralists

Somali Centralists seek to reunite Somalia under a strong central government. This segment is comprised primarily of educated and political elites, specifically members of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Many of these elites are members of Somalia's dominant Hawiye clan located in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. Centralists also include members of smaller clans subordinated by regionally dominant clans around Somalia. Many among these smaller clans believe that they would have better representation under a strong centralized government. Centralists generally oppose attempts to create a more decentralized federal political system and do not acknowledge Somaliland's demand for recognition as an independent nation. They believe that a strong central government is the only way to achieve stability and defend against perceived interference from regional powers.

### Regionalists

Members of this segment believe that a loose federation of self-governing regional states is the only viable form of government for Somalia. Regionalists generally come from locally dominant clans Puntland, Galmudug, and South and Central Somalia. These clans include the sub-clans of the Majerten Darod clan in Puntland, the Hawiye clan in Galmudug, Hawiye clan in the Ximan and Xeeb Administration, and the Warsangeli and Dhulbahante Darod sub-clans associated with the Khaatumo State. Many Regionalists believe that a strong central government will never be effective enough to control the whole of Somalia, and if it were, would only be a source of oppression. They advocate for a devolution of power into the hands of local governments and support the use of a bottom-up approach that balances local traditions with modern forms of government to reconcile local conflicts and build peace. Regionalists broadly do not support Somaliland's goal to be recognized as an independent state, as Regionalists still believe in a united Somalia.

### Somaliland Nationalists

Somaliland Nationalists support Somaliland's goal to achieve international recognition as an independent country. They laud Somaliland's stability relative to Somalia proper and believe that its former independence as its own nation based on former colonial borders justifies their need for international recognition. Members of this audience segment live in Somaliland and

are primarily from the Isaq, Somaliland's dominant clan. Many members of the Warsengeli and Dhulbahante Darod sub-clans in the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions of eastern Somaliland do not support Somaliland's claims to independence. As a result of their support for Somaliland autonomy, Somaliland Nationalists do not believe that Somaliland should participate in Somalia's peace discussions, and argue that Somalia will never be able to achieve peace and stability as a single, unified state.

## RELIGIOUS GROUPS

### Salafi Islamists

Somalis studying in Saudi Arabia first brought Salafi Islamism to Somalia in the mid-twentieth century. Broadly, Salafi Islamists believe in a strict interpretation of Islamic theology and practice modeled after the faith's earliest adherents. In the 1980s and 1990s, Al-Itihad Al-Islami (AIAI) was the primary Salafi group in Somalia and it sprouted numerous offshoots, including, Hisbul Islam, Salafiya Jadida and Al-Shabaab. As of 2012, Al-Shabaab was the most politically powerful of these groups, controlling much of South and Central Somalia and maintaining a presence in Galmudug and Puntland. The majority of Salafi Islamists in Somalia come from the Darod and Rahanweyn clan families from South and Central Somalia. Since 2009, many Salafi Islamists in Somalia have made the pursuit of a global caliphate their primary political goal. In addition to members of Al-Shabaab, Somali youth living in the famine-stricken regions in the South are members of the Salafi Islamist segment.

### Sufi Islamists

Sufi *tariqas* (religious orders) brought Sufism to Somalia in the fifteenth century. Sufism was the most common form of Islam in Somalia until the mid-twentieth century. While most Somalis are historically Sufi, the majority have abandoned many Sufi traditions. Older Somalis with a living memory of Sufism in Somalia and members of ASWJ, a Sufi paramilitary group allied with the TFG, are the primary members of this segment. ASWJ is a clan-based alliance controlled primarily by the Hawiye and Darod sub-clans that dominate Galmudug and districts within South and Central Somalia, including Hiiraan, Bay, Bakool, and Gedo.

### Moderate Islamists

Moderate Islamists in Somalia are an amalgamation of numerous political Islamic groups seeking to create a Somali state under the banner of Islam that is theologically similar to Salafism but more tolerant of different ideologies and more politically moderate. The segment consists of a number of political parties, religious organizations, and individuals seeking to unite Somalia under a more inclusive Islamic government. Of the many organizations that are part of this segment, the main group is the Muslim Brotherhood. Within Somalia, Al-Islah is the official branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. While there are a variety of organizations within this segment, most consist of educated and political elites and members of the diaspora. Members of this audience segment primarily belong to Hawiye sub-clans that live in or around Mogadishu.

# Sources

## SOMALIA AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

### Political Groups

#### Centralists

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus described the importance of segmenting Somali society by political ideas rather than political parties, since these broad political positions are more enduring and informative in Somali political discourse. Menkhaus described how political parties in Somalia fall along the divide of centralists versus regionalists and that members of this audience segment are intellectuals or members of the Diaspora. Head of BBC World Somali Services Yusuf Garaad Omar confirmed the existence of centralists and regionalists, highlighting the pros and cons of each group's motives. Omar confirms that Al-Shabaab supports a centralized government. Monitor360 Interview with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; Yusuf Garaad Omar (BBC News), 8 March 2012.
- Abdurahman Abdullahi describes Islamic groups who support a centralized approach to Somali government. He asserts that Islamists will support a centralized government that implements Sharia law. Abdurahman Abdullahi, "The Application of Shari'a Laws in Somalia," *Mareeg.com*. <http://www.mareeg.com/fidsan.php?sid=11068&tirsan=3>.
- In a Chatham House report on sub-national identities in Somalia, centralists are described as Somalis who fear that the splintering of the country will result in a number of small, unsustainable fragments and delay the prospects for national recovery. Members of this audience segment are anti-clanism and view regionalism as a tool for promoting clan interests, blaming clanism for Somalia's instability and violence. Centralists view a stable national government as a more viable option for peace. "Somalia's Transition: What Role for Sub-National Entities?" *Chatham House*. January 2012: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/0112report.pdf>.
- In an interview with *Somalia Report*, TFG Member of Parliament Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade said, "The only way forward is for Somalis to set and agree to build a strong central government, which leads the country on the right path" and called for the Somali people to "stand together to rebuild their country, and give a hand to the weak federal government" "MP Wants Sheikh Robow to Quit al-Shabaab," *Somalia Report*. 7 March 2012: [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3016/MP\\_Wants\\_Sheikh\\_Robow\\_to\\_Quit\\_al-Shabaab](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3016/MP_Wants_Sheikh_Robow_to_Quit_al-Shabaab).

#### Regionalists

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert Stig Hansen described the growth in support for local governments. Somalia expert Said Samatar emphasized the difference between regionalists and secessionists, commenting the regionalists are still pro-union, while secessionists desire complete independence. Somali First Lady Hodan Isse confirmed that most Somalis believe in regionalism, because they know a strong central government will no longer work for the people. Monitor 360 interviews with Stig Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Said Samatar (Rutgers), 10 February 2012; Hodan Isse (University at Buffalo), 22 March 2012.
- In her book *Getting Somalia Wrong*, Mary Harper confirmed the emergence of regional governments in Somalia that are gaining popularity. Calling these areas "mini-states," she claims that these semi-autonomous regions have become popular, particularly among Somali politicians from the Diaspora. Members of this audience segment oppose a centralized government. Mary Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong?: Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*. Zed Books. 2012. Pp. 105-111.
- Chatham House produced a report on the emerging and existing sub-national governments of Somalia, providing an overview of these state, regional, and district governments. Though some of these regional governments are more established than others, the Chatham House outlines the audiences that support such governments, which usually are members of the dominating clan or party in the region. "Somalia's Transition: What Role for Sub-National Entities?" *Chatham House*. January 2012: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/0112report.pdf>.

#### Somaliland Nationalists

- In a Monitor 360 interview, former Somaliland Foreign Minister Edna Adan Ismail describes Somaliland's call for international recognition of Somaliland's independence. Ismail asserted that Somalilanders are completely different from Somalis and do not share the same nationalist ideals as Somalis. She confirms that Somalilanders believe Somaliland is a separate country that has no affiliation with southern Somalia. Somalia expert Omer Hussein adds that Somaliland nationalists do not associate themselves with southern Somalis and views southern Somalia as a burden and hindrance to their growth. Monitor 360 interviews with Edna Adan Ismail (Former Somaliland Foreign Minister), 7 March 2012; and Omer Hussein; (Academy for Peace and Development), 3 February 2012. Ioan Lewis. *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*. Columbia University Press. 2008. Print. Pp. 24-60.

- Somaliland Minister Abdillahi Jama Geeljire outlines the perspectives of Somaliland nationalists. Saying that it was a mistake for Somaliland to merge with the rest of Somalia after it had gained independence from Italy, the minister vowed to represent Somaliland as an independent nation at the London Conference on Somalia. “Somaliland to Lobby for International Recognition at London Conference in Feb,” UN Integrated Regional Information Network via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 07 February 2012: AFP20120208497009.
- In his book, Saadia Touval describes the history of British Somaliland and explains that the hasty union between Somalia and British Somaliland has led to conflict between the two regions for many years. Because of the long distance between the two capitals (Hargeysa and Mogadishu), the two regions had developed very different political, legal, and economic systems, making the merger between them very difficult. Saadia Touval. *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*. Harvard University Press. 1999. Pp. 101–122.
- In an interview with *Wardheer News*, Dr. Mohamed Omer, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somaliland, advocated for Somaliland on behalf of this audience segment. Referring to this segment as “We Somalilanders,” he asserted that Somalilanders, separate from Somalia, have created their own country and built their own institutions. “An Interview with Dr. Mohamed Omer, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somaliland,” *Wardheer News*. 18 May 2011: [http://wardheernews.com/Wareysiyo/Mohamed\\_Omer/May\\_18\\_11\\_FM\\_Sl.html](http://wardheernews.com/Wareysiyo/Mohamed_Omer/May_18_11_FM_Sl.html).

## Religious Groups

### Salafi Islamists

- In interviews with Monitor 360, Somalia expert Roland Marchal asserted that the Salafi Islamists will not disappear with the defeat of Al-Shabaab officials, and Salafi Islamists have attempted to integrate themselves into Somali society by marrying into clan groups. Council on Foreign Relations Expert Rachel Beer described how Al-Shabaab's relationship with Al-Qaeda may be more of an attempt to improve its brand equity and local power base than a functional merger. ICG Consultant Rashid Abdi described the prominence of Salafi Islamists in Somali society, but claims that this audience segment group is relatively new, but their prominence in society is powerful and can only be countered by Sufi Islamists. Monitor 360 interviews with Rachel Beer (Council on Foreign Relations), 23 January 2012; Roland Marchal (SciencesPo), 24 January 2012; Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012.
- In *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, Afyare Abdi Elmi discusses how Somalis educated in Egypt and Saudi Arabia brought Salafi ideas to Somalia in the 1960s and how the ideas and associated groups changed over the last few decades. Afyare Abdi Elmi. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*. Pluto Press. 2010. Print. Pp. 51–61.
- The article “Somali Community in RSA Protests Exhumation of Cleric's Remains in Mogadishu” describes how the destruction of Sufi graves by Al-Shabaab caused an outcry amongst Somali Muslims. “Somali Community in RSA Protests Exhumation of Cleric's Remains in Mogadishu,” *Cape Town Voice of the Cape Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 26 March 2010: AFP20100326567004.
- In their report titled *Somalia's Divided Islamists*, the International Crisis Group describes the evolution of Salafi groups in Somalia, particularly Al-Shabaab. The report discusses the organization's shift in focus from Somalia to international jihad. *Somalia's Divided Islamists*, International Crisis Group. 18 May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.

### Sufi Islamists

- In a Monitor 360 interview, ICG Consultant Rashid Abdi described the dying segment of Sufi Islamists, but claims that Sufi Islamists hold the only potent counter-narrative to jihadi radicalism and extremism. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus confirmed the existence of the Sufi Islamist segment in Somalia and confirmed their support for Somali unity. Expert John Voll also confirmed the existence of Sufi Islamists as an audience segment in Somali society. He describes the Sufi religious leaders as influencers and arbiters among tribes. Monitor 360 interviews with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; John Voll (Georgetown University), 2 March 2012.
- In their report *Somalia's Divided Islamists*, the International Crisis Group argues that this narrative's advocacy of Sufism is strongly held by Sufi Islamists. “The alliance of clans is animated, the ASWJ claims, by an aversion to the extremist brand of Islam espoused by Al-Shabaab in a defense of traditional Sufi practices.” *Somalia's Divided Islamists* International Crisis Group. May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.

- In his essay on “Prospects for Al Itihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia,” Andre Le Sage asserts that Sufism is deeply rooted in Somalia’s history in a “symbiotic relationship (that) has persisted throughout the colonial and post-colonial era. “Prospects for Al Itihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia,” Andre Le Sage. *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 27, No. 89. September 2001: <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/som-AlltihadBrief.pdf>.
- A report by SOCAFRICA provides specific information about ASWJ in Somalia’s central region. This report details their networks, players, linkages, and goals. “Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a (ASWJ) Special Analysis, Micro-Structure of ASWJ Central,” *SOCAFRICA* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 25 July 2011: FEA20111003022630.

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### Moderate Islamists

- In interviews with Monitor 360, Former ambassador to Somalia David Shinn discussed the emergence of a strain of moderate Islamists associated with the Muslim Brotherhood distinct from Salafis or Sufis. Somalia expert Ahmed Samatar also emphasized the existence of a contemporary type of Islam that dominates Somali politics. Somali peace activist Asha Elmi confirmed the existence of moderate Islamists in politics and condemned politicians’ and religious groups’ use of Islam to gain political power. Somalia expert Peter Pham asserted that the type of Sharia law used by Somalis in their political rhetoric is unrecognizable in any other context, and Somalis often use knowledge of Islam as a way to gain respect or authority in Somali society. Monitor 360 interviews with Ambassador David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Ahmed Samatar (Rutgers University), 4 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; Asha Elmi (Somalia Transitional Federal Parliament), 15 March 2012; Peter Pham (Atlantic Council), 21 March 2012.
- In his article “The Roots of Islamic Conflict in Somalia” Abdurahman M. Abdullahi discusses the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Somali religious politics. He asserts that while they seek to restore Islam’s central role in society, they seek to be more inclusive and are opposed to conflict amongst Muslims. “The Roots of Islamic Conflict in Somalia,” *Hiraan Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 05 June 2010: FBS20100608370562.
- “New Political Party Formed in Somalia to Counter President Sharif” describes the formation of a new political party by former members of the Islamic Courts Union. “New Political Party Formed in Somalia to Counter President Sharif,” *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 14 February 2012: AFP20120215950003.

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## “THE FOREIGN OPPRESSORS”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Sayid Muhammad Abdulle Hasan:** A historical Somali figure that is regarded as a national hero. Born in the early 1870s, he is noted for leading an anti-imperialist war against the British, Italian, and Ethiopians and the establishment of the Dervish State in Somalia. In colonial times, the British referred to Hassan as the “Mad Mullah,” but Somalis view this term as offensive and prefer to refer to him as Mohamed Abdullah Hassan.
- **Colonization of Somali Territories:** Following the Berlin conference of 1884, European nations began an aggressive colonization of Africa. Europeans have been exploring the Horn of Africa since the nineteenth century. The British established the British Somaliland protectorate, which covered the northern part of present day Somalia, in 1887. Italy claimed the southern regions of Somalia in 1889, and the French established the French colony and protectorate in 1885 in what is now Djibouti. Ethiopia also claimed the eastern part of present day Somalia in 1887. The Northeastern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya is also considered to be ethnic-Somali territory.

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2. “Al-Shabab leader says Turkey facilitating west’s plan to ‘re-colonise’ Somalia,” *Jowhar.com* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 March 2012: AFP20120320950037.
3. “Demonstration Held in Opposition to Al-Shabaab-Al-Qa’ida Merger,” *Shacabka.net* [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 14 January 2012: FEA20120215026444.
4. The ASWJ Official Website: [www.aswj.org](http://www.aswj.org).
5. “Charcoal is fueling Al Shabaab,” *CNN.com*. 23 February 2012: <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/23/charcoal-is-fueling-al-shabaab/>.

### Sources

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### Audience Segment

- Several Somalia experts confirmed that this master narrative is widely held. Roland Marchal asserted that many Somalis are suspicious of foreigners. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus also confirmed that this suspicion of

foreigners is widely held. Peter Pham explained that Somalis use the term “foreigner” very broadly, partly because of the nature of the Somali language, but also because Somalis view many people as foreigners, including ethnic Somalis who join Al-Shabaab and some Somali politicians. Monitor 360 interviews with Roland Marchal (Sciences Po), 24 January 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; and Peter Pham (Atlantic Council), 21 March 2012.

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### Master Narrative

- This narrative was articulated and validated in a series of interviews with Somali experts. Roland Marchal asserted that Somalis are very skeptical of foreigners and inherently believe that any and all actions committed by foreigners in Somalia have an ulterior motive. Mary Harper asserted that Somalis are extremely xenophobic. Monitor 360 interviews with Roland Marchal (Sciences Po), 24 January 2012; Mary Harper (*BBC News*), 16 February 2012.
- In his book *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, Somali author Afyare Abdi Elmi expressed this narrative, saying that Somalis believe that foreign countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya continue to oppress Somalia through their relationships with other countries and their foreign policies. Somalis claim that Ethiopians and Kenyans fear a strong Somalia, and as a result have purposefully kept Somalia in chaos. Somalis accuse Ethiopians of sending weapons to factions and “micro-manage and/or undermining the Somali peace process.” Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*. Pluto Press. 2010. Print. Pp. 90–107.
- In his 1994 essay “The Somali Crisis: Time for an African Solution,” George Ayittey writes: “disputing factions now regard the United Nations as an obstacle to peace and ‘an occupying force.’ Indeed, the violence aimed at the United Nations has been due precisely to many Somalis’ resentment that the solutions to their problems would be dictated from outside and to suspicion about the United Nations’ political agenda.” Somalia’s record of failed Transitional Governments, which have all been formed outside Somali borders in peace talks located in Nairobi and Djibouti, has further fueled this resentment. George Ayittey, “The Somali Crisis: Time for an African Solution.” CATO Institute. 28 Mar 1994: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-205.html>.
- In a February 2012 article on *Somalia Report*, some Somalis expressed their skepticism toward the London Conference on Somalia. Some skepticism toward the UK’s involvement in Somalia’s affairs showed a fear of recolonization. A student in Boosaaso East Africa University wrote “colonization divided our nation and denied our wish so we will not accept it again. We prefer to die. We hate al-Shabaab and pirates but if this happens a lot of students will join them to fight for our independence.” “UK’s ‘return’ to Somalia part of growing engagement of foreign actors,” *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 3 February 2012: AFP20120208950024.
- In an article on the London Conference on Somalia, an author expresses the resounding sentiment that Somalia must work on their own solutions to its problems. “A serious action plan to address piracy and terrorism needs to be inside Somalia and supported by the Somali people inside the country.” The author states that the UK can only do so much, but “should let Somalis decide the best approach to address the Somali conundrum. Somalis and other participants have common objectives to address security, terrorism and piracy.” “Observer Calls for Examination of Proposals, Objectives of UK Summit on Somalia,” *Oxford Pambazuka News* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 8 February 2012: AFP20120213492014.
- Al-Shabaab uses this to gain popularity, especially in regions where people have been victimized by Kenyans and Ethiopians. Al Shabaab uses the term “Black Colonialism” to rally Somalis against their neighbors and writes: “By invading Somalia, E. African nations subserviently succumbed to the interests of Western imperialism at their own peril #BlackColonialism,” HSMPress, Twitter posting. 18 Jan 2012: <http://twitter.com/#!/HSMPress/statuses/159657386360053763>.
- In an audio recording in March 2012, Al-Shabaab leader Shaykh Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr criticized Turkey for “play[ing] in the conspiracy against the Somali people, who are Muslims. Turkey has become the tool for the ongoing Christian invasion of our nation.” Abu Zubeyr presented a poem accusing Turkey of obstructing the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate. “Al-Shabaab Amir Delivers Audio Message, Seeks Support in North Somalia,” *Codka Soomaalida* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 March 2012: AFP20120320385005.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- Officials in Galmudug banned operations of four non-governmental organizations and accused them of corruption. The four NGOs that were banned were: the World Health Organization, UNICEF, Relief International, and the Somaliland Family Health Association. “Galmudug Administration Bans 4 NGOs,” *Somalia Report*. 10 March 2012: [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3043/Galmudug\\_Administration\\_Bans\\_4\\_NGOs](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3043/Galmudug_Administration_Bans_4_NGOs).
- Many Somalis applauded the London Conference on Somalia because it encouraged a Somali solution to Somalia’s issues. “Observer Calls for Examination of Proposals, Objectives of UK Summit on Somalia,” *Pambazuka News* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 8 February 2012: AFP20120213492014.
- In March 2012, Al-Shabaab’s leader Abu Zubeyr claimed that “Western governments are facing extreme poverty and that’s why they are interested in the Somali economy.” He further asserted that the “Christian governments have invaded us because of our rich natural resources.” “Somalia: Al-Shabaab Leader Urges Muslims to Defend Religion, Resources,” *Ceelasha-Biyaha Radio Andalus* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 19 March 2012: AFP20120320643002.

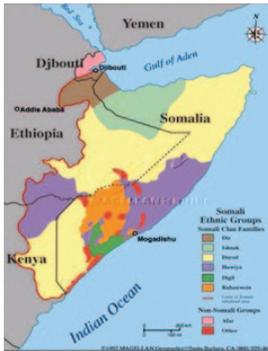
## Significance for Analysts

- Extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab attempt to gather support for their platform by expressing their platform in terms of this master narrative. By rallying against foreigners, exemplified by their position against the London Conference on Somalia, Al-Shabaab attempts to gather support from Somalis that sympathize with this attitude. "Al-Shabaab to Resist London Conference Outcomes 'By Any Means Possible,'" *Al Jazeera English* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 23 February 2012: AFP20120223532004.

## "GREATER SOMALIA"

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- Somaliweyn (Greater Somalia):** *Somaliweyn* (Greater Somalia) is a term that refers to the large area that includes all ethnic Somalis in the Horn of Africa region (see image below). This includes Djibouti, Somaliland, Somalia, eastern Ethiopia, and northeastern Kenya. Although Greater Somalia has never existed as a physical state, Somalis talk about Greater Somalia as a virtual state that links all Somalis together. (image via Somali Net: <http://www.somalinet.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=262&t=235765>)



- The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF):** Founded in the 1970s, the WSLF played a large role in the Ogaden War of 1977, when it joined with the Somali National Army to fight for the independence of the Ogaden region in eastern Ethiopia.
- The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF):** A separatist rebel group in the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia fighting for autonomy for ethnic Somalis living in the area. Formed in 1984, the ONLF is responsible for many attacks on the Ethiopian government and recruits Somalis mainly from the Ogaden clan. The Ogaden National Liberation Front is a splinter group of the Western Somali Liberation Front.

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- "Somali Islamist leader welcomes talks with Ethiopia over "occupied" territory," *Somali Independent Shabeelle Media Network* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 29 June 2006: AFP20060629950025.
- "Interview with Commander of Fighters of Ogaden National Liberation Front," *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television* in Arabic via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 27 April 2008: GMP20080427632002.
- Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*. Harvard University Press. 1999. Pp. 15–29.

## Sources

### Audience Segment

- Monitor 360 interviews with SMEs confirmed that this master narrative is widely held across segments. Monitor 360 interviews with Martin Webber (JE Austin), 25 January 2012; Rashid Abdi (Consultant for the ICG), 31 January 2012; William Reno (Northwestern University), 1 February 2012; Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Mary Harper (*BBC News*), 16 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.

### Master Narrative

- This narrative was articulated and validated in a series of interviews with Somali experts. Martin Webber noted that there is a tremendous sense of pride and self belief that comes from being Somali. A Somali would talk about Greater Somalia before talking about religion and believe they are one people. Many Somalis still have the flag and map of Greater Somalia on the walls of their houses. Mary Chester Crocker confirms that there is a strong narrative surrounding the idea that Somalia has never been divided and that Greater Somalia still exists. Rashid

Abdi describes this nationalism as an organic link that can never be broken. Though Somalis may accept that the borders will not disappear within the near future, there is still a strong tie among all Somali people, no matter what side of the border they live on. David Shinn cites this master narrative as one of the most important narratives in terms of its predictive analytic power. Harper confirms that Somalis talk about Greater Somalia in their day-to-day conversations. Monitor 360 interviews with Martin Webber (JE Austin), 25 January 2012; Chester Crocker (Georgetown), 26 January 2012; Rashid Abdi (Consultant for the ICG), 31 January 2012; David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Mary Harper (*BBC News*) 16 February 2012.

- In his book *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*, Saadia Touval states that Somalis' belief in common ancestry is at the root of Somali national solidarity. Touval writes that general sympathy for Somali nationalism is found among all sections of the Somali populations in Ethiopia, and nationalism has now become the most dynamic factor influencing political behavior in the area. Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*. Harvard University Press. 1999. Pp. 15–29.
- Ioan Lewis discusses the concept of Greater Somalia in *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*. He draws upon historical instances in which the Greater Somalia master narrative has inspired pan-Somali irredentist movements, sparking conflict with its neighbors Ethiopia and Kenya. He discusses the close relationship between the Somali unification issue and Somali foreign policy. Ioan Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*. Columbia University Press. 2008. Print. Pp. 24–60.
- Mary Harper's *Getting Somalia Wrong* cites instances in which key influencers have used the Greater Somalia master narrative to unify the Somali people. In most instances, these calls for Greater Somalia have sparked conflict or intervention by Somalia's neighbors, Ethiopia and Kenya. Mary Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*. Zed Books. 2012. Print. Pp. 25–28.
- Afyare Abdi Elmi describes the importance of this master narrative in the relationship Somalia has with its neighbors in his book *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*. Ethiopia and Kenya both fear the presence of this master narrative and feel threatened by the potential expansionary policy that could develop as a result. Elmi discusses how Kenya and Ethiopia have kept the nation divided in conflict to ensure that Somalia does not readopt its irredentist foreign policies. Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*. Pluto Press. 2010. Print. Pp. 90–107.
- In 2002, Darod clan leader Garad Salah declared, "I do not know anything better than the greater Somalia, and any party claiming to offer a better option without causing clashes and death must be having a hidden agenda." "Clan leader raps regional administration, calls for 'greater Somalia,'" *Mogadishu Times* via www.opensource.gov. 2 February 2002: AFP20020202000101.
- In 2002, leader of the Somali National Alliance Husayn Aydid announced that he "wants the six million or so Somali-speaking Kenyans and Ethiopians to go back to the family." "Kenya: Editorial blasts Somali warlord Aydid's call for greater Somalia," *Daily Nation* in English via www.opensource.gov. 3 February 2002: AFP20020203000007.
- In June 2006, Shaykh Hasan Dahir Aweys, leader of the ICU, said, "the land occupied by Ethiopia is unforgettable. It is in their blood and it is [a] national issue, where soldiers and citizens were killed during the 1977 Somalia-Ethiopia war." "Somali Islamist leader welcomes talks with Ethiopia over 'occupied' territory," *Somali Independent Shabeelle Media Network* via www.opensource.gov. 29 June 2006: AFP20060629950025.
- In an interview with *BBC World Service*, Ahmad Elmi Usman, president of the Khaatumo State, a contested region in eastern Somaliland, accused Somaliland of threatening Somalia's unity. The Khaatumo State received recognition from the TFG in March 2012. "New Administration's Leader Says 'Recognition' To Unite Somalia," *BBC World Service* via www.opensource.gov. 7 March 2012: AFP20120308643010.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- In a Monitor 360 interview, former Somaliland Foreign Minister Edna Adan Ismail expressed her disapproval of Somalia's ambition to create a Greater Somalia. Ismail said that the attempt to unite Somaliland with Somalia has failed because of their irreconcilable differences and that a Greater Somalia will never be possible. Ismail also mentioned that Somalilanders and Somalis are two distinct peoples, and the international community should not confuse the two. Monitor 360 interview with Edna Adan Ismail (Former Somaliland Foreign Minister), 7 March 2012.
- In an interview on *Al-Jazirah*, the spokesperson of the Ogaden National Liberation Front voiced his opinions on the Ethiopian government, accusing them of committing crimes against Somalis in the Ogaden region. He called the Ethiopians occupiers, and asked for support for the sovereignty of the Ogaden region. "Interview with Commander of Fighters of Ogaden National Liberation Front," *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television* via www.opensource.gov. 27 April 2008: GMP20080427632002.

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### Significance for Analysts

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somali journalist Ahmed Abdisamad Elmi described how Somalis are content with Somalia's borders since the Somalis living in northeastern Kenya and Djibouti are doing well. Elmi described the treatment of Somalis in eastern Ethiopia as inhumane and emphasized the need to help those people. Elmi said that a Greater Somalia is not an objective for Somalia right now, since it needs to focus on building peace first. Monitor 360 interview with Ahmed Abdisamad Elmi (Hiraan Online), 28 February 2012.

- In an article published by the Nairobi *East African Online*, reporters mention the drivers of Kenyan and Ethiopian involvement in Somalia, citing the “lingering fear that a strong united Somalia will revive the pan-Somalism nationalism.” “Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti join AU Mission to Protect Interests in Somalia,” *The East African Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 22 January 2012: AFP20120123577002.
- In 2002, a call for Greater Somalia by leader of the Somali National Alliance Husayn Aydid resulted in a heated editorial article in the Kenyan newspaper. “Kenya: Editorial blasts Somali warlord Aydid’s call for greater Somalia,” *Daily Nation* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 3 February 2002: AFP20020203000007.

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## “NATION OF ENTREPRENEURS”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Bosaaso:** The Somali seafaring company Kaptallah established the port of Bosaaso in the early nineteenth century. Today it has replaced Mogadishu as the primary port. It is the business capital of Somalia and is a refueling station for maritime transport between the Red Sea and the Gulf.
- **Bakaara Market:** The Bakaara Market in Mogadishu is the largest market in Somalia. The market was created during the reign of Siad Barre to sell daily essentials which included maize, sorghum, beans, peanuts, wheat, rice, gasoline and medicine. With the start of the civil war, the market began to sell a wide range of weapons, from small arms to large anti-aircraft guns, becoming one of the largest African weapons markets. The market also sold forged documents including passports from Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia.
- **Kismaayo:** Kismaayo is the capital of Lower Jubba and is a port city currently under the control of Al-Shabaab. Business is prospering in Kismaayo despite Al-Shabaab’s strict regulations on business.
- **Berbera:** The port of Berbera in Somaliland is a deep sea port which allows large ships to dock, facilitating the export of millions of Somali livestock, as well as food aid and other merchandise.

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2. “Swedes Study Somali-American Entrepreneurship in Minneapolis,” *Currents Online*. 21 October 2010: <http://sacc-usa.org/currents/business/swedes-study-somali-american-entrepreneurship-in-minneapolis/>.
1. “Somalia moving towards peace, stability,” *Middle East Online*. 22 February 2012: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=50798>.
2. “Highlights of 2011 Somaliland and the challenges ahead,” Somaliland Embassy. <http://www.somalilandembassy.se/Pressreleases43.html>.
3. “Two Somalis to attend President Obama’s Entrepreneurial Summit,” *Radio Daljir*. 6 April 2012: <http://www.radiodaljir.com/xview.php?id=692>.
4. “USAID Supports Economic Opportunities for Somali People,” USAID. 7 June 2011: [http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/2804/USAID\\_Supports\\_Economic\\_Opportunities\\_for\\_Somali\\_People](http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/2804/USAID_Supports_Economic_Opportunities_for_Somali_People).

### Sources

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#### Audience Segment

- Monitor 360 interviews with SMEs confirmed that this master narrative is widely held across Somalis. Somalia expert Martin Webber says that there is a tremendous sense of pride and self-belief that comes from being a Somali. Ambassador David Shinn also describes the Somalis as pragmatic, entrepreneurial people. Monitor 360 interviews with Martin Webber (JE Austin) 25 January, 2012; David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012.

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#### Master Narrative

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert William Reno described Somalis as people who pride themselves in being “pragmatic, honest businessmen that always over-perform.” Reno complimented Somalis’ entrepreneurial abilities. Somalia expert Mary Harper described how some Somali businesspeople take advantage of the chaos in Somalia. She says that many Somalis have made a profit off of the war by providing services to war-torn areas. Somaliland resident Amal Ismail emphasized that Somaliland needs its own country so that it can thrive economically. Because Somaliland is still part of Somalia, its businesses cannot benefit as much as they could if Somaliland were its own country with its own trade rules and restrictions. It also suffers from the trade sanctions placed on Somalia. Monitor 360 interviews with William Reno (Northwestern University), 1 February 2012; Mary Harper (*BBC News*), 16 February 2012; Amal Ismail (*Bridge Magazine*), 28 February 2012.

- A Chatham House report discusses the history of the Somali economy and the success of Somali business since the fall of the Siad Barre government, saying that the “economy of Somalia and the diaspora Somali communities has proved remarkably resilient in the face of prolonged warfare and government collapse.” The report states that “the end of the Barre regime in many senses liberated Somalian business people and helped to bring about a remarkable development in certain industries. ... However, the absence of government meant that Somalian businesses lacked a champion on the international scene and needed a measure of government protection.” The report states that although “stateless Somalia provided ample opportunities for the business elite to trade, invest and operate in a domestic market completely free of price controls and state regulations,” business and economic activity in Somalia was better before the civil war. “Somali Investment in Kenya,” *Chatham House* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 15 March 2011: FBS20110325459423.
- *New York Times* writer Jefferey Gettleman cites, “Somalis’ legendary entrepreneurial spirit,” in an article interviewing Somalis who believe that Somalia is “finally turning around.” Gettleman provides anecdotes of several Somalis, including a banker, fisherman, and artist, that have come to Mogadishu to start new businesses and pursue new opportunities. One Somali policewoman says, “we can smell a government coming.” “A Taste of Hope in Somalia’s Battered Capital,” *New York Times*. 3 April 2012: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/04/world/africa/somalis-embrace-hope-and-reconstruction-in-mogadishu.html?pagewanted=1>.
- A press release from the Somaliland Embassy in Sweden outlined the major issues in Somaliland and its reasoning behind its need for independence. Somaliland Ambassador Eidarus Sheikh Adan complimented Somaliland’s success in business and entrepreneurship, saying that Somaliland must call on the diaspora to bring entrepreneurship to the nation and refocus education on business development. “Highlights of 2011 Somaliland and the challenges ahead,” Somaliland Embassy. <http://www.somalilandembassy.se/Pressreleases43.html>.
- Jim Shanor, an American development expert for the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Mogadishu says that the “entrepreneurial spirit is deep in the Somalis ... and the spirit lives. These people don’t need much of a push to get going again. It’s in their blood. They just need capital, a lot of capital.” “Entrepreneurial flame still burns bright despite Somalia’s devastation,” *Baltimore Sun*. 28 December 1992: [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-12-28/news/1992363122\\_1\\_somalia-mogadishu-hassan](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-12-28/news/1992363122_1_somalia-mogadishu-hassan).
- Dahabshiil describes itself as an international funds transfer company founded in 1970 in Burao, Somalia by Mohamed Said Duale. Its headquarters are in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The firm has over 24,000 agents and branches worldwide. Dahabshiil Official Website: <http://www.dahabshiil.us/about-us/dahabshiil-story.html>.

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#### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- Two Somali businesswomen, Nasra Weheliye Malin (Finance Director, NationLink Telecom) and Alhan Mohamed Jama (Ismail Import Partners), were invited to the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship in Washington, D.C. The conference focuses on roles that entrepreneurs play in creating jobs and improving communities. Over 250 people of various religious backgrounds were invited. “Two Somalis to attend President Obama’s Entrepreneurial Summit,” *Radio Daljir*. 6 April 2012: <http://www.radiodaljir.com/xview.php?id=692>.
- USAID launched the Partnership for Economic Growth with Somalis in Somaliland to help benefit the local economy and improve stability in the region. The partnership hopes to help Somali entrepreneurs, especially women, gain access to business development services and create business that will attract investment. “USAID Supports Economic Opportunities for Somali People,” *USAID*. 7 June 2011: [http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/2804/USAID\\_Supports\\_Economic\\_Opportunities\\_for\\_Somali\\_People](http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/2804/USAID_Supports_Economic_Opportunities_for_Somali_People).

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#### Significance for Analysts

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia Expert Kenneth Menkhaus described the power of clans in politics and economics. He says that clans whose homes are in remote economic places will promote a central government because a regional government would confine them to a homeland with no natural resources or economic opportunities. Clans who are weak but control valuable agricultural land will argue for a federalist structure, because this will allow them to benefit from these resources. Monitor 360 interview with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.
- In September 2011, the Puntland government and Africa Oil began drilling for oil in the Puntland region. Residents of Puntland are “looking forward to becoming an oil-producing nation.” A Puntland official explained that Puntland is “ready to take advantage of this long-awaited lucrative oil extraction mission.” “Puntland Oil Drilling to Begin Soon,” *Somalia Report*. 13 September 2011: <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/1560>.

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### “SOMALIA OF THE PEOPLE”

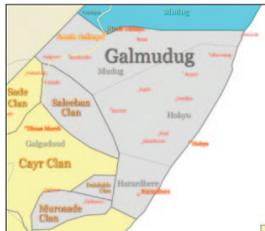
#### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- “Each Somali his own Sultan”: In the mid-nineteenth century, a Ugandan visitor to Somalia described Somalis to a British colonial officer: “Somalia, bwana, they no good; each man his own Sultan.” The visitor was referring to Somalis’ individualistic characteristics driven by their nomadic lifestyles. Somalia’s clan structure fostered a competitive society run by self-sufficient individuals bound by traditional codes of hierarchy, loyalty, and rivalry.<sup>7</sup>

- **Puntland State of Somalia:** Puntland is an autonomous state founded on July 23, 1998 by the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). It controls the three northeastern regions of Somalia—Bari, Nugaal, and northern Mudug. Three main sub-clans of the Majerten Darod clan—the Ise Mohamud, Omar Mohamud and Osman Mohamud—dominate Puntland politics.<sup>8</sup> Puntland has its own law enforcement, excise collection, and representation outside their territory. Puntland is highly involved with the TFG and supports a united Somalia run by a federal government. Puntland’s current president is Abdirahman Mohamud Farole. Other smaller clans and sub-clans, such as the Leelkase and Warsangeli, oppose the Puntland government, and this often results in clan conflict.<sup>9</sup>
  - **Map of Puntland** (image via *Kulmiye News*: <http://www.kulmiyeynews.com/?nid=5093>)



- **Galmudug:** Galmudug is a state in the central region of Somalia that considers itself a federal division within the larger federal republic of Somalia. The name is a combination of Mudug and Galgaduud. Its administrative capital, Gaalkacyo, is located in the southern half of the district of Gaalkacyo. The TFG has recognized Galmudug for its efforts, praising the “intellectuals, traders and the people of Galmudug” for “achiev[ing] security and development.”<sup>10,11</sup> Though the Galmudug region is home to many clans, the Sa’ad sub-clan of the Habar Gidir Hawiye clan dominates the Galmudug administration, but “the Salebaan, Ayr, Dir, Marehan and Shikaal sub-clans refuse to accept Galmudug as their governing authority.”<sup>12</sup> In December 2011, fighting between rival clan militias from Galmudug and the Ximan and Xeeb Administration broke out in Central Somalia over land disputes in the Bacadweyne District.<sup>13</sup> Ongoing clashes between clans in Gaalkacyo, a city divided between Puntland and Galmudug, has resulted in a number of deaths.
  - **Map of Galmudug** (image via *Wehel Media*: <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/topic/39>)



- **Ximan and Xeeb:** The Ximan and Xeeb Administration is a district administration with little territorial control located in Central Somalia. In 2008, elders and elite members of the Suleiman sub-clan of the Habar Gidir Hawiye clan formed their own regional administration in the districts of Ximan and Xeeb, based in the town of Adado.<sup>14</sup> Though it has established its own police force, government, education system, and legal system, the administration has not been involved in negotiations such as the Garoowe Conference. The president of the Ximan and Xeeb Administration is Mohamed Abdullahi Aden “Tiiceey” who was born in Somalia, but spent years living in the Somali Diaspora in Minnesota before returning to Somalia.
  - **Map of Ximan and Xeeb** (image via *Somalia Report*: <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3120>)



- **Khaatumo State:** The Khaatumo State was created by the Dhulbahante clan in January 2012 and received recognition from the TFG in March 2012. Covering the disputed Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions of eastern Somaliland, the Khaatumo State protects the interests of the Dhulbahante Darod sub-clans in the region that do not support Somaliland's quest for independence from Somalia.
  - **Map of Khaatumo State** (image via *All Voices*: <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/6415404-what-sort-of-negotiations-could-take-place-between-ssc-and-secessionist-issak-somaliland>)



- **Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ):** Established in 1991, the paramilitary group ASWJ aims to unite Sufi Islamists against other Islamic groups, such as Al-Shabaab. Allied with the TFG, ASWJ is controlled by major Hawiye sub-clans in Hiiraan, Galgudug, and Middle Shabeelle.<sup>15</sup> Although ASWJ has many factions that control different sections throughout South and Central Somalia, the ASWJ Central faction's primary goal is to establish "control of Central Somalia for Somali Sufis."<sup>16</sup>
- **Somali clan system:** Almost all of the Somali population associates with a clan. The clan structure is a vital aspect of Somali society and underlies all social and political structures. Clan identities are volatile, and clan elders often shape these identities to gain power or form and break alliances. Because of the dynamism of the clan system, it is difficult to use clans as a method of segmenting Somali society, as sub-clan divisions and fragmentations are easily manipulated. According to the Transitional Federal Charter, Somali clans are divided into a 4.5 power sharing system: referring to the four major clans (Darod, Hawiye, Dir, and Digil and Mirifle) and an umbrella group comprised of minority clans and groups. Under this system, the Isaq is considered part of the Dir clan. Most Somalis, particularly those in the diaspora, object to this power sharing system.
  - **Darod Clan:** The Darod clan lives primarily in northern Somalia, Kismayo, and the southwestern Gedo region. Members also live in the Somali-inhabited regions in Ethiopia and northeastern Kenya. As one of the larger, more influential clans in Somalia, the Darod has played a large role in Somali politics. The Majerten Darod dominated Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) was responsible for the formation of the Puntland autonomous state. Warsangeli and Dhulbahante Darod subclans that dominate the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn region (SSC) have long been in conflict with the Isaq clan in Somaliland. The Warsangeli sub-clan established its own Maakhir State of Somalia in 2007 and the Dhulbahante sub-clan established the Khaatumo State in 2012. During the civil war, Darod sub-clans fought with Hawiye sub-clans over the control of Gaalkacyo.
  - **Hawiye Clan:** The Hawiye clan is a large, dominant clan in Somalia found primarily in central and southern Somalia, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and the Northeast region of Kenya. The Hawiye is the dominant clan in Mogadishu, Galmudug, and the Ximan and Xeeb Administration.
  - **Isaq Clan:** Members of the Isaq clan primarily reside in Somaliland and dominate Somaliland politics. They also reside in the Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia. During the Siad Barre era, the Barre government persecuted the Isaq clan's Somali National Movement (SNM), who later proclaimed independence of the Republic of Somaliland. The Isaq clan objects to the Transitional Federal Charter power sharing system, which groups them together with the Dir clan.
  - **Dir Clan:** Members of the Dir clan live primarily in the northwestern, central and southern regions of Somalia and in Djibouti.
  - **Digil and Mirifle Clan:** The Digil and Mirifle Clan also includes the Rahanweyn clan, which some analysts may view as a sub-clan. Rahanweyn and Digil are agro-pastoral people who live primarily in South and Central Somalia. Members of these clans descend from the Saab tribe who, unlike descendents of the Samaal tribes, rely on crops and livestock to support their families.

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## Sources

### Audience Segment

- Monitor 360 interviews with Somali experts confirm the widely, but not deeply, held nature of this master narrative. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus claimed that clans who benefit most from the regional structure will advocate for regionalism. However, clans that feel subordinated by this structure will not support this master narrative. Hodan Isse, wife of Somalia Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamud Ali, confirmed that most Somalis believe in regionalism because they know a strong central government will no longer work for the people. Monitor 360 interviews with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; Hodan Isse (University at Buffalo), 22 March 2012.
- During the Garoowe Conference in Puntland in February 2012, politicians met to discuss the future political system of Somalia. ASWJ officials, who represent Somali Sufists, signed an agreement in support of representation in the form of regional governments. "Signatories of the Garowe conference reportedly sideline other Somalis," *Daniile Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 21 February 2012: AFP20120222950034.

### Master Narrative

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert William Reno emphasized the widespread use of pragmatism in Somali society. He claims that "there are really shocking reversals of alliances and shifts that seem to convey that they have no underlying morals or convictions, but what I think it really reveals is the extreme pragmatism with which people operate to protect themselves." Somalia expert Stig Hansen confirmed this use of pragmatism. He says that the Somali national unity narrative is still very strong, but intertwined with clanism in that people will support a national government only if their clan benefits. Horn of Africa specialist Andrew Harding claims that Somalis view the TFG as an "exile-Nairobi-based government" and do not trust it. Somalia expert Sally Healy discusses clanism in Somalia, stating that Somalis seek equilibrium among clans, and as long as clans are treated with respect and equality, there will be no conflict. Arne Westad confirmed the existence of this master narrative, asserting that Somalis have witnessed years of failed attempts at centralization and now seek an alternate solution. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus says that weaker clans that have access to valuable resources argue for federalism since they will not benefit from a central government. Other clans that have more power under the central government structure will have no interest in a federal system that confines them to a homeland with little valuable resources. Thus, clans will advocate for political systems depending on which system benefits them the most politically, socially, and economically. Monitor 360 interviews with William Reno (Northwestern University), 1 February 2012; Stig Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Andrew Harding (*BBC*

News), 7 February 2012; Sally Healy (SOAS), 13 February 2012; Arne Westad (London School of Economics), 14 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.

- In a speech at the Somalia National Constitutional Conference, Puntland's President Farole expressed his desire for a strong federal system that "incorporates our Islamic values, our Somali culture, and our local traditions. This political system begins with a Federal Constitution." "Puntland President Speech at Opening of Somalia National Constitutional Conference," Garowe Online. 17 February 2012: [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Press\\_Releases\\_32/Puntland\\_President\\_Speech\\_at\\_Opening\\_of\\_Somalia\\_National\\_Constitutional\\_Conference\\_Garowe\\_II.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Press_Releases_32/Puntland_President_Speech_at_Opening_of_Somalia_National_Constitutional_Conference_Garowe_II.shtml).
- In January 2012, key influencers at the Dhulbahante clan conference, Ali Khalif Galayr, Suleiman Ise Ahmad, Adam Abdullahi Shuriye, and Boqor Uthman Burmadow, clan leaders and chairmen of the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn region, called on the Somaliland government to desist from violence and resolve differences by peaceful means and dialogue. "Khaatumo Spokesman Urges Somaliland to Leave for 'Peace,'" *BBC World Service* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 14 March 2012: AFP20120315643013.
- President of the Khaatumo Regional Administration Ahmad Elmi Osman declared that the Khaatumo State will "determine the unification or separation of Somalia" and will "hurt those who seek to divide Somalia." "New Administration's Leader says 'Recognition' to Unite Somalia," *BBC World Service* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 7 March 2012: AFP20120308643010.
- A January 2012 report from Chatham House, "Somalia's Transition: What Role for Sub-National Identities?" provides an overview of the state, regional, and district governments that are established or emerging in Somalia. The report claims that Somaliland and Al-Shabaab present themselves as nationalists, where Somaliland wants its own national government separated from the rest of the country and Al-Shabaab, whose goal is to control the Somali national government, opposes the TFG and the sub-national entities. The report categorizes Puntland as a successful state government and Galmudug, Ximan and Xeeb, and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) as regional or district administrations. ASWJ does not represent itself as a regional or district entity, but its support base is "localized in terms of clan support and territorial control and in this sense it resembles other regional administrations." The report considers Azania/Jubbaland an emerging virtual entity that is unable to claim local legitimacy. "Somalia's Transition: What Role for Sub-National Entities?" Chatham House. January 2012: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/181725>.
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- In an interview with the Center for Research on Globalization, Somali resident Mohamed Hassan stated: "During those years when Somalia advocated for revising the borders, Ethiopia became a US imperialism bastion. The West did not care about conflicts between Africans but its own interests. The United States and Great Britain were providing and training militaries in Ethiopia, Kenya and Eritrea." Lalieu, Gregoire and Michel Colon. "Somalia: How Colonial Powers drove a Country into Chaos—Interview of Mohamed Hassan," Center for Research on Globalization. 11 February 2010: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?aid=17549&context=va>.
- On 20 March 2012, *Somalia Report* discussed the efforts of the Galmudug Security Committee. It stated that "although several clans live within Galmudug, a state that is made up of Mudug and Galgaduud regions, the Suleiman, Ayr, Dir, Marehan and Shikaal sub-clans refuse to accept Galmudug as their governing authority." "Somalia: Galmudug Security Committee Seeks Clans to Hand Over Weapons," *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 March 2012: AFP20120324597021.
- On 26 March 2012, the TFG promised to help the Galmudug regional state develop the region and consider them when distributing grants from donors and friendly countries. "Somali Government Pledges to Support Development of Galmudug Regional state," *Mogadishu Suna Times* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 26 March 2012: AFP20120327597021.
- A report by SOCAFRICA provides specific information about ASWJ in Somalia's central region. This report details their networks, players, linkages, and goals. This report states that ASWJ Central's faction is primarily "concerned with establishing control of Central Somalia for Somali Sufis." "Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) Special Analysis, Micro-Structure of ASWJ Central," *SOCAFRICA* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 25 July 2011: FEA20111003022630.
- At the Garowe conference in February 2012, ASWJ representative Abdikadir Malin Nur signed a road map plan with representatives from Puntland and Galmadug in support of a federalized system. "Signatories of the Garowe conference reportedly sideline other Somali clans," *Dayniile Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 21 February 2012: AFP20120222950034.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- General Yusuf Mohamed Siad "Indha Adde" held a news conference in Mogadishu criticizing the international community for favoring the TFG, threatening to destabilize the government if the international community granted TFG officials' proposals for extension. "Ex-Somali warlord threatens to destabilize government if polls are postponed," *Shabeelle Media Network* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 23 May 2011: AFP2011052495005.
- A *Garowe Online* editorial criticized the United Nations of failing "to listen, assess, analyze and implement the Somali people's wish for a strong government that protects citizens, upholds justice and provides economic op-

portunities.” The author further assessed that the U.N. must “focus on what’s working, and less focus on what has failed” and that “no other system in Somalia has worked except for the federal structure” encouraging the U.N. to support a federal system of government that allows “the formation of states that manage each region’s affairs.” “Somalia’s misery, the world’s opportunity,” *Garowe Online*. 19 August 2011: [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Editorial\\_29/Editorial\\_Somalia\\_s\\_misery\\_the\\_world\\_s\\_opportunity.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Editorial_29/Editorial_Somalia_s_misery_the_world_s_opportunity.shtml).

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### Significance for Analysts

- In March 2012, the security committee of the Galmudug region declared that clans must turn in their weapons “in an attempt to tighten the region’s deteriorating security situation.” Puntland and Galmudug have fought over the control of the city of Gaalkacyo, which has suffered from on-going clan conflict. “Somalia: Galmudug Security Committee Seeks Clans to Hand Over Weapons,” *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 March 2012: AFP20120324597021.
- Puntland security forces blamed Al-Shabaab for the conflict in Galkacyo, claiming that Puntland security forces were battling Al-Shabaab militants. Puntland refused to admit to clan-based clashes, claiming that Al-Shabaab caused the incursions. “Was the Battle for Galkayo a Clan Dispute or a Victory for Puntland Over Al-Shabaab?” *Jamestown Foundation*. *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol: 9, Issue: 35. 15 September 2011: [http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,THE\\_JF,SOM,,4e78656d2,0.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,THE_JF,SOM,,4e78656d2,0.html).
- In a report by *Africa Report*, Somalia expert Mary Harper warned that “one of the biggest failures of policy toward Somalia has been the fixation with lengthy and expensive internationally sponsored peace conferences” saying that a better policy would be to focus on the more stable regions and administrations such as Puntland and Somaliland. “The dangers of carving up Somalia,” *The Africa Report*. 6 February 2012: <http://www.theafricareport.com/index.php/news-analysis/the-dangers-of-carving-up-somalia-50180834.html>.
- In a report by *SOCAFRICA*, a Somali researcher from Mogadishu mentioned that “Al-Shabaab has been successful in recruiting Puntland people in Gaalkacyo and Galgala, motivated by their hate of the Majerten.” “Clan Dynamics in Puntland,” *SOCAFRICA* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 13 January 2012: FBS20120123294323.

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## “NATIONAL UNITY”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Transitional Federal Government:** The TFG is the current manifestation of federal government in Somalia. Subscribers to this master narrative disagree over whether the TFG is the long-term answer to strong central government.
- **Muslim Brotherhood:** Al-Islah is the representative of The Muslim Brotherhood in Somalia and positions itself as moderate and peaceful in the midst of conflict.
- **Somali Republic:** The Somali Republic was formed in the 1960s when Somalia gained independence from colonial powers. Somaliland and Somalia merged to form a single democratic state. The republic was destroyed when Siad Barre took control. Subscribers to this narrative see their ultimate goal as a successor to the Somali Republic.

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2. “Ex-Islamic court officials said form new political party,” *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 February 2012: AFP20120220950054.
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### Audience Segment

- Monitor 360 interviews with SMEs confirmed that this narrative is held by Centralists and Moderate Islamists. Monitor 360 interviews with Roland Marchal (Sciences Po), 24 January 2012; Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), William Reno (Northwestern University), 2 February 2012; 2 February 2012; David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Sally Healy (Chatham House), 13 February 2012; Arne Westad (London School of Economics), 14 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; Ahmed Elmi (Hiraan Online), 28 February 2012.
- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus described the importance of segmenting Somali society by political ideas rather than political parties, since these broad political positions are more enduring and informative in Somali political discourse. Menkhaus described how political parties in Somalia fall along the divide of centralists versus regionalists and those members of this audience segment are intellectuals or members of the diaspora. Monitor 360 interview with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.

- In interviews with Monitor 360, Ambassador David Shinn and Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus discussed the emergence of a strain of moderate Islamists associated with the Muslim Brotherhood distinct from Salafis or Sufis. Monitor 360 interviews with David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.

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### Master Narrative

- This narrative was articulated and validated in a series of interviews with Somalia experts. Arne Westad pointed out that the Barre regime was corrupt and that he abused the power of central government. Kenneth Menkhaus argues that Somali nationalism has been revived over the past 15 years, but largely in a negative sense. According to Menkhaus, Somalis believe that if Somalia is divided, then foreign countries like Ethiopia will exploit Somalia and provoke regional conflict. National unity is the best way to defend against this. Monitor 360 interviews with Arne Westad (London School of Economics), 14 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.
- In a Chatham House report on sub-national identities in Somalia, Centralists are described as Somalis who fear that the splintering of the country will result in a number of small, unsustainable fragments and delay the prospects for national recovery. Members of this audience segment are anti-clanism and view regionalism as a tool for promoting clan interests, blaming clanism for Somalia's instability and violence. Centralists view a stable national government as a more viable option for peace. "Somalia's Transition: What Role for Sub-National Entities?" Chatham House. January 2012: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/0112report.pdf>.
- In his essay "The Application of Shari'a Laws in Somalia," Islamic scholar Abdurahman Abdullahi describes Islamic groups who support a centralized approach to Somali government. He asserts that Islamists will support a centralized government that implements Sharia law. Abdurahman Abdullahi, "The Application of Shari'a Laws in Somalia," *Harowo.com*. 20 March 2009: <http://harowo.com/2009/03/20/the-application-of-shari%E2%80%99a-laws-in-somalia-abdurahman-m-abdullahi-baadiyow/>.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- In his essay "Balkanization and Subjugation of Somalia," the Somali envoy to the United States Abukar Arman criticizes decentralization and asserts that this policy would provoke instability and conflict in Somalia. "Within the Somali context, the concept promotes the official dismemberment of the State by 're-tribalization' and paves the way for its detrimental deconstruction or 'recolonization.'" "Balkanization and Subjugation of Somalia," *Turkish Weekly*. 07 July 2011: [www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/2844/balkanization-and-subjugation-of-somalia.html](http://www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/2844/balkanization-and-subjugation-of-somalia.html).
- In his essay "The Balkanization of Somalia," former Somali Minister of Education, Abdirun Mohamud asserts that decentralization in Somalia would cause clan and regional conflict. In addition, he claims that "by supporting regional actors inside Somalia, instead of supporting the federal government, the international community is contributing to the centrifugal forces that keep the country weak, violent, and in a prolonged humanitarian crisis." He asserts that without a strong central government, the country will never be able to escape its problems. "The Balkanization of Somalia," *Foreign Policy in Focus*. 26 September 2011: [http://www.fpi.org/articles/the\\_balkanization\\_of\\_somalia](http://www.fpi.org/articles/the_balkanization_of_somalia).

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### Significance for Analysts

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus states that allegiances to particular ideas and causes can change based on a pragmatic calculation of which of those ideas benefit that group more than the other. Menkhaus described how certain clans support regionalism because they benefit more from a regional system over a centralized system. Monitor 360 interview with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.
- In his essay "The Application of Shari'a Laws in Somalia," Islamic scholar Abdurahman Abdullahi describes moderate Islamic groups who support a centralized approach to Somali government. He asserts that they seek to include everyone and establish a strong and centralized government that appeals to all parties. Abdurahman Abdullahi, "The Application of Shari'a Laws in Somalia," *Harowo.com*. 20 March 2009: <http://harowo.com/2009/03/20/the-application-of-shari%E2%80%99a-laws-in-somalia-abdurahman-m-abdullahi-baadiyow/>.

## “THE POLITICAL WIDOW”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Khaatumo State:** The Khaatumo State was created by the Dhulbahante clan in January 2012 and received recognition from the TFG in March 2012. Covering the disputed Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions of eastern Somaliland, the Khaatumo State protects the interests of the Dhulbahante Darod sub-clans in the region that do not support Somaliland’s quest for independence from Somalia.
  - **Map of Khaatumo State** (image via *All Voices*: <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/6415404-what-sort-of-negotiations-could-take-place-between-ssc-and-secessionist-issak-somaliland>)



- **The Flag of Somaliland** (image via *Flags.net*: <http://www.flags.net/SMLD.htm>)



- **Somaliland Statue:** This statue was erected in Somaliland in the 1990s with the motto “United we stand, divided we fall” inscribed on it (see image below). Somalilanders claim that this motto and statue aims to unite the regions of Somaliland, from the Awdal state in the west to the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions in the east. (image via *UNPO*: <http://www.unpo.org/article/10712>)



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6. "Somalia: Soldiers 'Defect' From Somaliland to Khatumo State Administration," *Baidoa Information Center* in Somali via www.opensource.gov. 16 March 2012: AFP20120316385004.

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### Audience Segment

- In a Monitor 360 interview, former Somaliland Foreign Minister Edna Adan Ismail describes Somaliland's call for international recognition of Somaliland's independence. Somali expert Omer Hussein adds that Somaliland nationalists do not associate themselves with southern Somalis and views southern Somalia as a burden and hindrance to their growth. Monitor 360 interviews with Omer Hussein (Academy for Peace and Development), 3 February 2012; Edna Adan Ismail (Former Somaliland Foreign Minister), 7 March 2012.

### Master Narrative

- This narrative was expressed in a number of interviews with Somalia experts. Somalia expert Lee Seymour says that there is an illusion in a set of ideas that pan-Somalism has failed and Somalia must be left behind. Somalilanders are very proud of their success and effectiveness at installing their own institution. They have completely different beliefs and look down on Puntland. Somalia expert Said Samatar emphasized the difference between Somaliland and Puntland; while Puntland seeks a federal state, Somaliland seeks complete independence. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus outlined Somaliland's narrative and says it is based on three premises: 1) grievance toward the genocide of the Somali National Movement; 2) legitimacy and the claim that Somaliland has built a successful stable government; 3) legality and the claim that Somaliland had never legally joined Somalia. Somalia expert Yusuf Garaad Omar asserted that if Somaliland were recognized as independent, war would break out between Somalia and Somaliland. Somalia First Lady Hodan Isse and Somalia expert Peter Pham both acknowledged that this master narrative could lose popularity if the Somaliland government fails to maintain control over the region. Monitor 360 interviews with Lee Seymour (University of Leiden), 2 February 2012; Said Samatar (Rutgers University), 10 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; Yusuf Garaad Omar (BBC News), 8 March 2012; Peter Pham (Atlantic Council), 21 March 2012; Hodan Isse (First Lady of Somalia), 22 March 2012.
- In his book *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*, Ioan Lewis describes the genocide and murders committed against the Somali National Movement, which was largely made up of Isaq clan members. Somaliland suffered under the Siad Barre regime and uses these mass murders as one of the reasons that it deserves to be its own country. Ioan Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*. Columbia University Press. 2008. Print. Pp. 1–40.
- Saadia Touval explains that the unification of Somalia and British Somaliland was carried out "without adequate preparation" which created problems in his book *Somali Nationalism*. The long distance between the two capitals (Hargeysa and Mogadishu), separate written language systems, and incompatible judicial systems, police forces, military establishments, economies, and trade systems made it very difficult for the two areas to merge. Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*. Harvard University Press. 1999. Pp. 15–29.
- A Daalo News article outlines Somaliland's reasoning behind its call for international recognition. The article compares the Somaliland situation to the Senegal and Gambia relationship, which ended after their union failed. The article criticizes the African Union for suppressing Somaliland's claim of independence and claims that Somalia and Somaliland's unity are based on false premises, and Somaliland should be independent from Somalia just as Eritrea disintegrated from Ethiopia. "African Union—An obstacle to Somaliland Colonial Border," *Daalo News*. <http://daalonews.com/News/African%20Union,%20%20An%20obstacle%20to%20Somaliland%20Colonial%20Border.html>.
- In an article, Somaliland Minister Abdullahi Jama Geeljire states that it was a mistake to merge with the rest of Somalia after it had gained independence from Italy. "Somaliland to Lobby for International Recognition at London Conference in Feb," *UN Integrated Regional Information Network* via www.opensource.gov. 07 Feb 2012: AFP20120208497009.
- In an interview with *Wardheer News*, Mohamed Omer, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somaliland, states, "Somaliland has achieved a level of peace and stability that is exceptional in the region and even on the African continent. Recognition of its independence by the International Community remains the ultimate goal of its foreign policy. Somaliland has peacefully gone back to its former status, successfully establishing itself as a functioning state. We Somalilanders have good reasons to be proud of our common achievements. We have rebuilt our country that had been completely in shambles, we have given it institutions that are functioning and we have earned the respect of the outside world, having demonstrated that is not Somalis as such that are incapable of organizing themselves and of living peacefully together." "An Interview with Dr. Mohamed Omer, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somaliland," *Wardheer News*. 18 May 2011: [http://wardheernews.com/Wareysiyo/Mohamed\\_Omer/May\\_18\\_11\\_FM\\_Sl.html](http://wardheernews.com/Wareysiyo/Mohamed_Omer/May_18_11_FM_Sl.html).
- In October 2001, former Somaliland President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal discusses the importance of Somaliland's independence and how it was only justifiable after the injustice done to its people. "Africa's 55th president,

Egal of Somaliland,” *Afrol News*. 11 October 2001: [http://www.afrol.com/html/Countries/Somalia/backgr\\_egal\\_interview.htm](http://www.afrol.com/html/Countries/Somalia/backgr_egal_interview.htm).

- Former Somaliland President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal expresses the reasons why Somaliland should be independent. Egal discusses the failures of Greater Somalia and declares that Somaliland will never make the mistake of rejoining Somalia again. He says, “We joined Somalia in the ‘60s without any agreement thinking that when the five regions [northeastern Kenya, southwestern Ethiopia, Djibouti, Italian Somaliland and present Somaliland] joined to form Greater Somalia an agreement would be reached on how to share [power]. Since the issue of Greater Somalia has long since died we see no reason why you are insisting on a link between Hargeysa and Mogadishu. We chose to join Mogadishu before but have now decided to reclaim our independence... The fact that Somalia has included in their government some individuals who are natives of Somaliland poses no problem to us. This will not change the republic of Somaliland’s position regarding its independence...” “Somaliland president says region will not withdraw bid to secede,” *Hargeysa Mandeeg* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 23 October 2000: AFP20001023000138.
- In December 2011, a public uprising in Boorama (in western Somaliland) accused the Somaliland government of hunting down people of other clans and of restricting the freedom of speech in Somaliland. One protestor said, “We don’t want a government of Isaq, we want greater Somalia, we feel injustice and humiliation inside Somaliland.” “Video Public uprising in Somaliland,” *Sunatimes*. 9 December 2011: <http://sunatimes.com/view.php?id=1556>.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- Former Somaliland Foreign Minister Edna Adan Ismail opposed any comparison between Somaliland and Puntland, claiming that Somaliland and Somalia are two completely separate countries, and a comparison between the two regions would be a misunderstanding of Somaliland’s history. Monitor 360 interview with Edna Adan Ismail (Former Somaliland Foreign Minister), 7 March 2012.
- Somali native Abdul Ghelleh accused Somaliland of keeping Somalia in conflict. Ghelleh expressed the widespread belief that Somaliland sends support to Al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups to disrupt Somalia in order to justify their independence. Monitor 360 interview with Abdul Ghelleh (Garowe Online), 15 February 2012.
- In an interview with Somali TFG Minister Abdirahman Hosh Jibril, the minister addressed the question of Somaliland. He stated, “Somaliland is part of Somalia. Yes they have attained stability within their regions and we are proud of their achievements, but it will remain a federal state of the larger Somalia. There is no need to divide Somalia further at this stage because the entire world is seeking unity. “Somali minister optimistic about implementation of Garowe principles,” *Somalia Report* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 18 March 2012: AFP20120318950021.

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### Significance for Analysts

- In a Monitor 360 interview, Somalia expert Peter Pham expressed the need to address Somaliland before the progress in politics and economics in the region is lost. Pham emphasized that without any recognition or assistance, Somaliland would not be able to maintain the success it has worked for over the past twenty years. Monitor 360 interview with Peter Pham (Atlantic Council), 21 March 2012.
- Somaliland political leader Faysal Ali Warabe expressed his support for President Silanyo’s decision to join the London Conference on Somalia despite Somaliland’s absence from all Somalia-related peace conferences held in the past twenty years. Warabe reported that Somaliland needed to present themselves and their needs to the international community. “Somaliland said attending London conference to present succession bid,” *Dayniile Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 11 February 2012: AFP20120211950065.
- Although Somaliland prides itself in its democracy and its respect for the freedom of rights, the Somaliland Journalist Association has reported violations against journalists in the region. “Somalia: Press Group in Somaliland and Condemns Detention of 2 Journalists,” *Radio Dalmar Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 21 February 2012: AFP20120221301005.
- In reference to the Dhulbahante Clan conference that discussed the formation of the Khaatumo State, Somaliland interior minister said he considered the conference “injurious to the existence of the Somaliland independence and the coexistence of its people, because it was being attended by such politicians as Ali Khalif Galayr who espoused the principle of Greater Somalia.” “Somaliland Minister Voices Concern Over Dhulbahante Clan Conference,” *Haatuf Online* in Somali via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 2 January 2012: AFP20120103301001.

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## “JIHAD AGAINST THE APOSTATES”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Salaf:** The *Salaf* are known as the companions of the prophet. The term refers specifically to the first three generations of Muslims. Salafi Islamist groups like Al-Shabaab believe that these Muslims practiced the purest form of Islam and aspire to return to that state.
- **Khilaafa:** *Khilaafa* refers to the Islamic caliphate that existed in various incarnations until the early twentieth century. In the time of the Prophet, the caliphate consisted of the present-day Gulf countries. In the decades after the Prophet’s death, under the Rashidun and Umayyad caliphs, the caliphate expanded from Spain and Northern Africa to Persia and Central Asia. Its size fluctuated until its final incarnation as the Ottoman Empire. It was finally

abolished in 1924. While it is the ultimate goal of internationalist jihad to reestablish the caliphate, they seek to expand the caliphate beyond its historical borders. Al-Shabaab's leadership has adopted this goal, but is a major point of contention for some within the organization who want a domestic focus, only seeking to establish Islamic government in Somalia.

- **Shirk:** *Shirk* refers to polytheism and other practices that are forbidden under Islam. Salafi groups refer to many Sufi practices, like the veneration of Saints, celebration of the Prophet's birthday, and offering of charity for ancestors as Shirk. These practices are a point of conflict between Salafis and Sufis, and are the major reason that Salafis refer to Sufis as apostates.
- **Tahwid:** *Tahwid* refers to the concept of monotheism in Islam. Salafis are especially strict about this concept and it underlies their belief that Sufi Islam is apostate.

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1. There are nationalist dissidents within the organization, championed by Mukhtar Ali Robow, who disagree with the goal of international jihad and only seek to create an Islamic state in Greater Somalia.
2. "Special Report: Afghanistan," *OSC and Monitor 360*, September 2011.
3. "Somalia's Second Islamist Threat: A Backgrounder on Hizb al Islam," *American Enterprise Institute*. 8 October 2010: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/somalias-second-islamist-threat-backgrounder-hizb-al-islam>.
4. "Al-Shabaab Fighters Reportedly Seize 'Key Town' of Dhusamareb," *Associated Foreign Press* (World Service) via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 20 Mar 2012: AFP20120320534005.
5. "Somalia: Leader of Hisb al-Islam Welcomes 'Unity' Merger with Al-Shabaab," *Associated Foreign Press* (World Service). 27 December 2010: AFP20101227509018.
6. "Somali Community in RSA Protests Exhumation of Cleric's Remains in Mogadishu," *Cape Town Voice of the Cape Online* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 26 Mar 2010: AFP20100326567004.
7. "Leader of Somalia's Al Shabab in Kenya Calls for Jihad Against Christians," *YouTube* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 10 Jan 2012: AFP20120201950032.

## Sources

### Audience Segment

- Multiple SME interviews with Monitor 360 confirmed that this narrative is held by Salafi Islamists. Monitor 360 interviews with Rachel Beer (Council on Foreign Relations), 23 January 2012; Roland Marchal (Sciences Po), 24 January 2012; Chester Crocker (Georgetown University), 26 January 2012; Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; William Reno (Northwestern University), 2 February 2012; David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Ahmed Samatar (Macalaster University), 4 February 2012; Abdul Ghelleh (Garowe Online), 15 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.
- In their report "Somalia's Divided Islamists," the International Crisis Group describes the Salafi Islamist segment as a "highly intolerant and belligerent jihadi theology and culture that fuels and complicates intra-Islam conflict in Somalia." "Somalia's Divided Islamists," International Crisis Group, May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.

### Master Narrative

- This narrative was articulated and validated in a series of interviews with multiple Somalia experts in conversations with Monitor 360. Monitor 360 interviews with Roland Marchal (Sciences Po), 24 January 2012; Chester Crocker (Georgetown University), 26 January 2012; Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; William Reno (Northwestern University), 2 February 2012; David Shinn (George Washington University), 3 February 2012; Abdul Ghelleh (Garowe Online), 15 February 2012.
- In an interview with Monitor 360, Rachel Beer pointed out that Al-Shabaab's merger with Al-Qa'ida could be seen as "branding," attempting to leverage the association with Al-Qa'ida to enhance their domestic reputation. Monitor 360 interview with Rachel Beer (Council on Foreign Relations), 23 January 2012.
- In an interview with Monitor 360, Kenneth Menkhaus asserted that Al-Shabaab has separated themselves from other Islamic movements in Somalia because of their strict interpretation of Islam. Al-Shabaab is intolerant of other Islamic movements because they see them as apostate. Menkhaus also asserted that young Somalis see Al-Shabaab as a viable option because they are frustrated with the failures of traditional Somali society. Monitor 360 interview with Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012.
- In an interview with Monitor 360, Ahmed Samatar emphasized that young Somalis are drawn to this master narrative because of the opportunity for peace, stability and justice that Al-Shabaab claims it offers. He says that Somali youth are desperate for opportunity and frustrated by the conflict of the last few decades. Monitor 360 interview with Ahmed Samatar (Macalaster University), 4 February 2012.

- In their report “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” the International Crisis Group describes the Salafi critique of other sects of Islam, specifically Sufism, which they call apostate because of their polytheistic tendencies. “Sufi Islam is particularly disliked because of saint-worship and other idolatrous (shirk) acts.” The report goes on to emphasize that this is the reason that Al-Shabaab, “have gone to great lengths to desecrate and destroy Sufi shrines.” In addition, the report addresses the change in Al-Shabaab’s political objectives. “Al-Shabaab sees its agenda as much broader than the Somali-inhabited regions of the Horn of Africa. It aspires to creating a new global Islamic Caliphate with undefined geographical boundaries.” “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” International Crisis Group, May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.
- In his essay “Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia,” David Shinn discusses the strength of foreign ideology and leadership within Al-Shabaab. “Foreigners occupy key positions in Al-Shabaab. The connection Al-Shabaab and Al-Qa’ida is growing stronger.” “Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Spring 2011: <http://fpri.org/orbis/5502/shinn.somalia.pdf>.
- Al-Shabaab’s official twitter account asserts that their ultimate objective is “restoring the global Islamic Khilaaafa.” HSMPress, Twitter Page. <https://twitter.com/#!/hsmppress>.

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- In their report “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” the International Crisis Group describes the opportunity to exploit the schisms and factionalism within Al-Shabaab. “Personality and policy frictions escalated within the movement, and the gulf widened between those amenable to some form of political settlement and those wedded to Al-Qa’ida inspired notions of a permanent global jihad.” “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” *International Crisis Group*, May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.
- In his article, “Blowback in Somalia,” Jeremy Scahill interviewed Salafi Islamists in Somalia who asserted that Al-Shabaab gains strength from their portrayal of US actions: “Every step taken by the US has benefited Al-Shabaab.” He asserts that their support of Ethiopia during the invasion has allowed Al-Shabaab to portray the United States as directly opposed to Somalia’s best interests. “Blowback in Somalia,” *The Nation*, 7 September 2011: <http://www.thenation.com/article/163210/blowback-somalia>.
- In a speech in October 2006, Mukhtar Ali Robow (Abu Mansur) focuses on the defense of Somalia against foreign forces, with no mention of broader intentions: “The country needs to be defended through a true Islamic spirit and at the same time blood and material wealth be scarified for it.” “Islamist Leaders Tell Somalis to Prepare for Long War against Somalia,” *Hiraan WWW-Teste* via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 27 October 2006: AFP20061027301002.

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### Significance for Analysts

- In an interview with Monitor 360, Stig Jarle Hansen discussed the spread of this master narrative to diaspora communities whose point of view is generally more ideologically intense as compared to the more pragmatic Somalis. He asserted that it represents an opportunity for Al-Shabaab to spread their influence beyond Somalia. Monitor 360 interview with Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012.
- In a YouTube video calling for jihad against Christians in Kenya, the leader of Al-Shabaab in Kenya reaches out to the Somali diaspora in the country in an attempt to get them to join the jihad in Greater Somalia. “Leader of Somalia’s Al Shabab in Kenya Calls for Jihad Against Christians,” YouTube via [www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov). 10 Jan 2012: AFP20120201950032.

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## “RETURN OF THE TARIQAS”

### Key Phrases, Symbols, or Images

- **Tariqas:** *Tariqas* are Sufi religious orders that acted as schools in Somalia. *Tariqas* teach Sufis how to interpret and understand their branch of Islam. Salafis take issue with this concept as they believe that teaching or interpreting Islam is wrong; the only sources of Islamic knowledge should be the Quran and the Sunnah. Sufis see *Tariqas* as an important component of stability, education, and moral justice in Somali society.
- **Tombs of Sufi Saints:** Sufi Islam emphasizes the importance of paying homage to ancestral saints, and around Somalia there are a number of ornate tombs of the most important Somali Sufi saints. Salafi Islamists see these tombs as evidence of Sufi polytheism and apostasy; therefore, they actively destroy the tombs and dig up the bodies of those saints. Sufi Islamists point to this as an example of Salafi intolerance and disrespect for Somali traditions.

- The tomb of a Sufi saint being destroyed by Al-Shabaab militants (image via *The Washington Post*: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/islamist-fighters-allied-to-al-shabab-de/2011/10/27/gIQAPKSoNM\\_photo.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/islamist-fighters-allied-to-al-shabab-de/2011/10/27/gIQAPKSoNM_photo.html))



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1. "Somalia's Divided Islamists," International Crisis Group, 18 May 2010: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf).
2. "Gedo Leader Vows to Eliminate Foreign Jihadists," *Somalia Report*, 29 March 2011: [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/404/Gedo\\_Leader\\_Vows\\_To\\_Eliminate\\_Foreign\\_Jihadists](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/404/Gedo_Leader_Vows_To_Eliminate_Foreign_Jihadists).
3. *ASWJ Official Website*. [www.ASWJ.org](http://www.ASWJ.org).
4. "Somali public, government welcome divisions among Al-Shabaab leadership," *Dayniile Online* via [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov), 20 March 2012: APF20120320950039.

### Sources

#### Audience Segment

- Multiple SME interviews with Monitor 360 confirmed that this narrative is held by Sufi Islamists in particular. Monitor 360 interviews with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; John Voll (Georgetown University), 2 March 2012.
- In a Monitor 360 interview, ICG Consultant Rashid Abdi described the dying segment of Sufi Islamists, but claims that Sufi Islamists hold the only potent counter-narrative to Jihadi radicalism and extremism. Somalia expert Kenneth Menkhaus confirmed the existence of the Sufi Islamist segment in Somalia and confirmed their support for Somali unity. Political Islam expert John Voll also confirmed the existence of Sufi Islamists as an audience segment in Somali society. He describes the Sufi religious leaders as influencers and arbiters among tribes. Monitor 360 interviews with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; John Voll (Georgetown University), 2 March 2012.
- In their report "Somalia's Divided Islamists," the International Crisis Group argues that this narrative's advocacy of Sufism is strongly held by Sufi Islamists. "The alliance of clans is animated, the ASWJ claims, by an aversion to the extremist brand of Islam espoused by Al-Shabaab and in defense of traditional Sufi practices." "Somalia's Divided Islamists," International Crisis Group, May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.

#### Master Narrative

- This narrative was articulated and validated in a series of interviews with Somali experts. Rashid Abdi pointed out that Sufism has a deep history in Somalia and while the youth do not have a living memory of it, it stands as the best defense against Al-Shabaab, whose ideology is foreign. Kenneth Menkhaus emphasized the importance of religious cleavages in Somali society. He also emphasized their ties to traditional Somali structures like the clan system. John Voll emphasized that Sufi organizations in Somalia are different from Sufi organizations in Turkey in that they employ "muscular Sufism." They use hard power in order to achieve their goals. Monitor 360 interviews with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012; Stig Jarle Hansen (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), 2 February 2012; Kenneth Menkhaus (Davidson College), 22 February 2012; John Voll (Georgetown University), 2 March 2012.
- In his 2001 essay "Prospects for Al-Itihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia," Andre Le Sage says that Sufist Tariqas, "have no overt political agenda and tend toward peaceful co-existence with secular political authorities." Prior to the introduction of modern political Islamic movements in the "late 1960s," Sufi Islam "was essentially assimilated into clan culture." "Prospects for Al-Itihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia," *Review of African Political Economy*, September 2001: <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/som-AlltihadBrief.pdf>.

- In his book, *Saints and Somalis*, Ioan Lewis asserts that Sufism is an integral part of Somali society that has been in decline. “Sufism is long-established and well developed” in Somali society. Ioan Lewis, *Saints and Somalis*. Red Sea Press. 1998. Print Pp. 10–15.
- In his essay “The Roots of Islamic Conflict in Somalia,” Abdurahman M. Abdullahi asserts that when Sufism first came to Somali society, it incorporated native elements of the culture. “Some elements of their cultural norms and customs were considered part of Islamic jurisprudence.” “The Roots of the Islamic Conflict in Somalia,” *Wardheer News*, 9 June 2010: [http://wardheernews.com/Articles\\_2010/June/Badiyow/09\\_Roots\\_of\\_Islamic\\_Conflict.html](http://wardheernews.com/Articles_2010/June/Badiyow/09_Roots_of_Islamic_Conflict.html).
- On their official website, ASWJ asserts that they fight against the Salafis because Al-Shabaab is ideologically opposed to Sufism and has launched a wave of repression against Sufis since they assumed control. *ASWJ Official Website*, [www.aswj.org](http://www.aswj.org).

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### Significance for Strategic Communicators

- In an interview with Monitor 360 Rashid Abdi pointed out that Sufism is the true form of Somali Islam, and that foreign Salafis came in, attacked Sufism and attempted to eliminate it from Somali society. He asserts that many older Somalis long for their youth when Sufism was openly practiced. He goes on to point out that while ASWJ claims to defend Sufism, it is a very clan-based organization and Somalis are suspicious of their intentions. Monitor 360 interview with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012.
- In their report “Somalia’s Divided Islamists” the International Crisis Group asserts that while the organization is animated in “defense of traditional Sufi practices...territorial and clan calculations also motivate it.” “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” International Crisis Group, May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.

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### Significance for Analysts

- In their report “Somalia’s Divided Islamists” the International Crisis Group describes the territorial conflict between Al-Shabaab and ASWJ. The report asserts that because of ASWJ, “Al-Shabaab is under tremendous pressure” in Central Somalia. “Somalia’s Divided Islamists,” International Crisis Group, 18 May 2010: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B74%20Somalias%20Divided%20Islamists.pdf>.
- In an interview with Monitor 360, Rashid Abdi asserted that young Somalis have no living memory of Sufism and because of that Sufism is on the wane. He went on to assert that in order for Al-Shabaab to be defeated and for there to be peace, Sufism needs to be reawakened in Somalia. Monitor 360 interview with Rashid Abdi (Consultant, ICG), 31 January 2012.





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