

Ekkehard Forberg
Ulf Terlinden

Small Arms in Somaliland: Their Role and Diffusion

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Ekkehard Forberg and Ulf Terlinden

work as research assistants at the Berlin Information-center for Transatlantic Security (BITS). They both study Political Science at the "Free University of Berlin".

Contact:

Ekki.Forberg@bits.de

Ulf.Terlinden@bits.de

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Berlin Information-center for
Transatlantic Security (BITS)
Rykestr. 13
D-10405 Berlin
Germany
ph. +49 30 4468 58-0
fax +49 30 4410-221
bits@bits.de

Ekkehard Forberg
Ulf Terlinden

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGKED	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst
AICF	Action International Contre la Faim
AK (AK-47, AK-74, AKM etc.)	7.62 mm Kalashnikov assault rifles
ANS / HI	Action Nord Sud / Handicap International
AP	Anti-personnel
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
G3	7.62 mm Heckler and Koch rifle
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IRG	International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa
LPI / HAP	Life and Peace Institute / Horn of Africa Programme
M16	5.56 mm assault rifle
NDC	National Demobilisation Commission (Hargeisa)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
SCPRP	Somali Civil Protection and Rehabilitation Project
SNA	Somali National Alliance (USC-faction)
SSA	Somali Salvation Alliance (USC-faction)
SDA	Somali Democratic Alliance
SKS	7.62 mm Simonov self-loading rifle
SNM	Somali National Movement
SNMA	Somali National Movement Alliance
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDOS	United Nations Development Office for Somalia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOSOM II	Second United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
USC	Unites Somali Congress
USF	United Somali Front
USP	United Somali Party

MAGAZINES / NEWSPAPERS

HAB	Horn of Africa Bulletin, Uppsala
JDW	Jane's Defence Weekly
taz	Die Tageszeitung, Berlin

PREFACE

*"Everybody is his own policeman."
Garaad Abshir, Las Anod*

Somalia as a whole is currently often perceived by the international public to be a country in turmoil. And it is viewed that this turmoil is based on a lack of central government combined with a predominance of armed factions. However, in reality, much of Somalia, particularly Somaliland¹, is a rather peaceful place with - to some extent - structures of traditional or government control in place.

The following report, which is based on our field research of three weeks in March/April 1998 and on observations made in September 1998, draws a picture of the role which small arms currently have in Somaliland's post-war society. The term "Small Arms", for this report, is defined as those arms which can be carried by an individual. The definition includes pistols, revolvers, rifles, carbines, small and medium-sized machine guns, grenades, grenade launchers, light mortars and hand-held missile and rocket systems. However, our research concentrates on hand-held fire arms².

International and non-governmental organisations as well as some governments have increased their interest in problems related to the proliferation of small arms world-wide. This report has been written in the context of preparations for the project "Small Arms and Light Weapons: Assessing Issues in the Horn of Africa (SALIGAD)". The authors hope to stimulate and facilitate tailored approaches to tackle the harmful social impact of such weapons in the Horn of Africa region.

So far, very little printed information on the actual role of small arms in Somaliland is available. During our earlier review (Forberg / Terlinden 1998), we found that if literature contains small arms-related information at all, it is often limited to very special aspects of the issue, e.g. in a conflict study or in assessments of the conditions for demobilisation. Thus, this report also attempts to fill gaps in the existing literature and to document the oral information which is widely available in Somaliland. The authors believe that at the current stage of research, a comprehensive look at the role of small arms in Somaliland is needed. This may help to determine the priorities for further steps.

Information on arms transfers is occasionally available from newspapers and magazines. We have systematically searched for such information in the Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB), Jane's Defence Weekly (JDW), the German daily paper "Tageszeitung" (taz), a database of "Reuters" reports and the internet³.

¹ We use the term "Somaliland" to refer to the five regions of Awdal, Togdheer, Sool, Sanaag and Woqooyi Galbeed. By using the term "Somaliland", we do not express a recognition of Somaliland's independence, nor do we regard Somaliland as being part of the (non-existent) state of Somalia.

² This is also based on our understanding that mortars, grenades, rockets and missiles currently have a minor role - if any - in the relatively calm situation of Somaliland. We also collected information on these small arms whenever we came across it, but we did not ask for such information and we have not included it in this report.

The term "light weapons" will be used as an equivalent to "small arms".

³ Some of these searches have been limited to certain periods of time:

All in all, small arms as such no longer determine the social dynamics of daily life in Somaliland. High numbers of weapons are not seen on the street, nor are they used on a large scale. Instead, specific dangers lie in the potential of these weapons for armed conflict and individual violence.

Huge numbers of weapons are diffused in the population and are available on the market of the region as a whole. We are making a cautious assessment of the internal arms trade in Somaliland. The interregional arms trade nowadays tends to pass through (or leave) Somaliland to other parts of the Horn of Africa.

The report analyses the social and cultural roles which small arms possess in Somaliland society. Furthermore, the actual degree of (and potentials for) arms control in the different parts of Somaliland will be assessed.

We felt that at the current stage of research on the issue, it was crucial to look at every armed group in the country, including "official security organs". The police not only has the function of implementing weapon laws, it should also "lead by example" regarding the management of its own weapons, as should the army.

Apart from gathering information on small arms in Somaliland, we aimed to develop methodological skills and tools for field research on the issue in general. However, this has not been included in the report.

The research for this report has been conducted in the course of our internships in the preparatory phase of the SALIGAD project, which was funded by the Horn of Africa Programme of the Life and Peace Institute (LPI-HAP / Sweden), the German Church Development Service (AGKED) and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (IPACS / Canada). We particularly want to thank Wolfgang Heinrich, Johan Svensson and Kiflemariam Gebrewold, who have made our internships possible. Our colleagues at the Life and Peace Institute hosted us very kindly during our 8-month stay in the region.

There are many people whom we thank for their contributions to this report. These people are listed in Annex I, except those who wished to remain anonymous. Emmanuel Deisser deserves special mention for his highly valuable information and encouraging advice. We thank Henrietta Wilson at BITS for editing the language of the document.

1. METHODOLOGY

The field research had two sets of aims:

1. *to gather information regarding:*
 - the actual use of weapons
 - the diffusion of small arms in the population
 - the management of small arms in armed forces (police and military)
 - the current mechanisms and sources of weapons proliferation
 - present and potential weapons control mechanisms/efforts by various actors
 - the social / cultural role of small arms
 - the perception of the "small arms problem" by the people of Somaliland.
2. *to support the development of tools and methodology for small arms research in the Horn of Africa in general. This included:*
 - finding appropriate ways of phrasing questions
 - identifying specific research "hooks" in the local context
 - experiencing the need of and limitations of field documentation
 - identifying key groups with important knowledge.

Instruments

We prepared sets of interview guides targeted at different groups for the field research. These were not designed to be a list of questions to be posed in their entirety to all interviewees. Rather they were intended to be comprehensive guidelines from which relevant questions could be selected for each interview.

Observations proved to be another important source of information, made e.g. in the army camp or when we met the militia in Las Anod.

Weapons in general are a far less sensitive issue in Somaliland than we originally anticipated. However, obtaining aggregate information on the trade in light weapons remained difficult, since it requires the identification of people with insider knowledge. Building a good relationship in order to gain their confidence is a long process. High officials usually do not provide any information on the arms trade.

In general, it is extremely difficult to cross-check information on the arms trade.

Selection of People

The number of people interviewed contains quite a high proportion of officials. Whenever we could, we tried to let "ordinary people" verify "official" information⁴. However, it proved to be rather difficult to find reliable persons outside the government administration who are knowledgeable about small arms issues.

In many cases, we had to question whether representatives of "civil society" were really in a position to talk on behalf of "their" communities. The leadership of so-called grass-roots NGOs in Somaliland often originates from the upper- or upper middle-class. This educated elite - ex-government servants are often among them - has experiences from the war (and in respect to small arms) which differ greatly from those of their "constituencies". Some were involved in the leadership of warring

⁴ Besides that, we cross-checked "official" information with other officials.

factions on either side. Many of them may have had better resources at their disposal to cope with problems arising from the use of weapons⁵.

Another problematic factor regarding representatives of NGOs in Somaliland is the fact that many of the NGOs do not differ very much from private business. A for-profit oriented group is likely not to provide reliable information in order to attract "business" (e.g. in the form of donor investment).

Besides the lack of interviews with "ordinary people", we deeply regret that we did not have the chance of interviewing lower ranks of the military, police, and militias.

A general problem encountered in the research was the lack of any reliable statistics in Somaliland, ranging from the number of citizens and the level of crime up to the number of government soldiers or ex-combatants. The official numbers that are available are likely to be greatly exaggerated, especially when they derive from the context of (potential) projects.

⁵ One way of understanding this was that we were receiving "standardized" answers that did not express personal dismay, but only mentioning theoretical assumptions of what could be the impact of small arms.

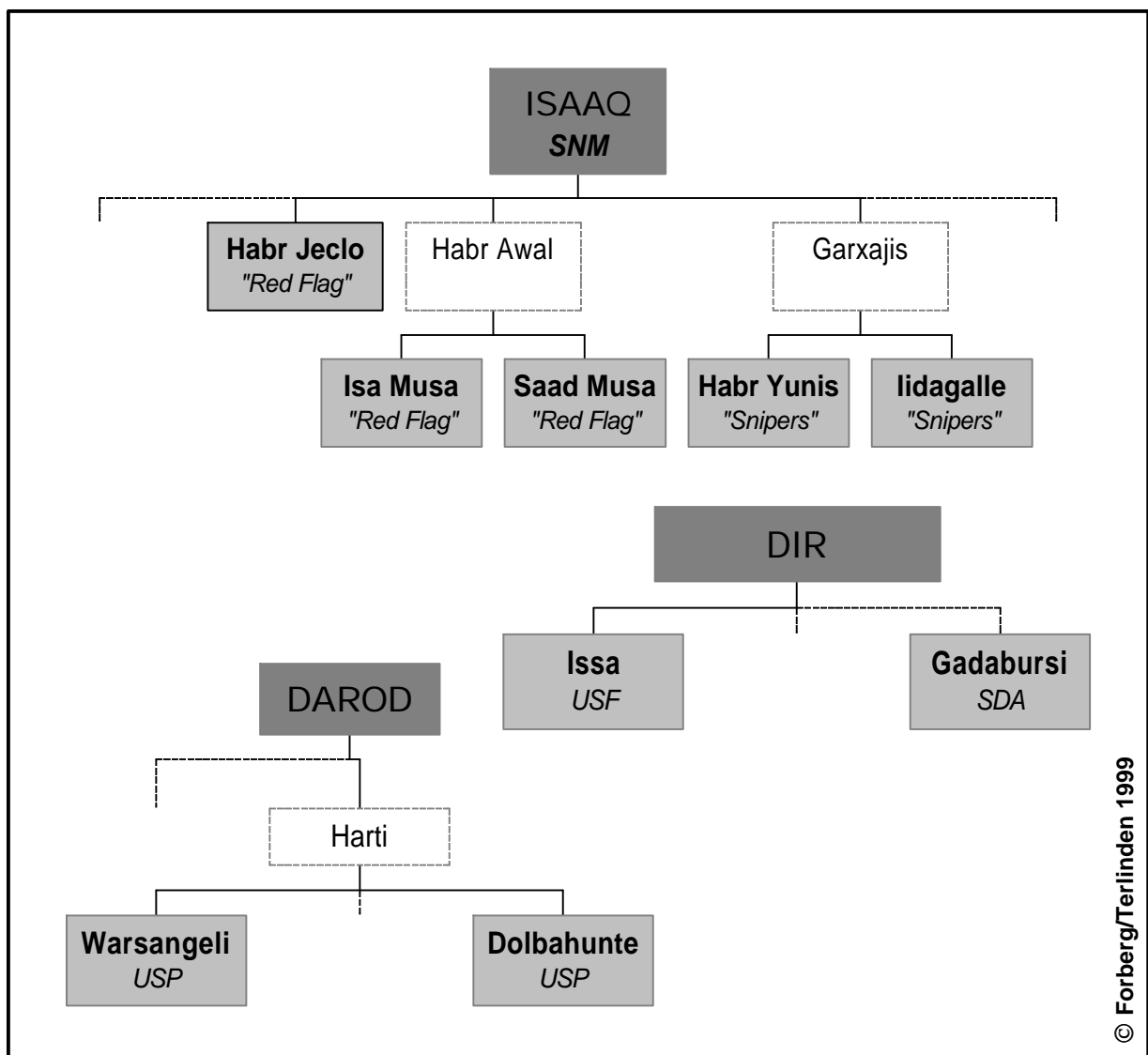
2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical Background

The People of Somaliland

The number of people living in Somaliland today can be estimated to be between 1 and 2 million. Official statements often put the number at 2.5 - 3 million, of which 70% supposedly live in the rural areas while 30% make up the urban population (NDC 1998, 2). The first estimate, however, seems to be more realistic since official "statistics" are often exaggerated⁶.

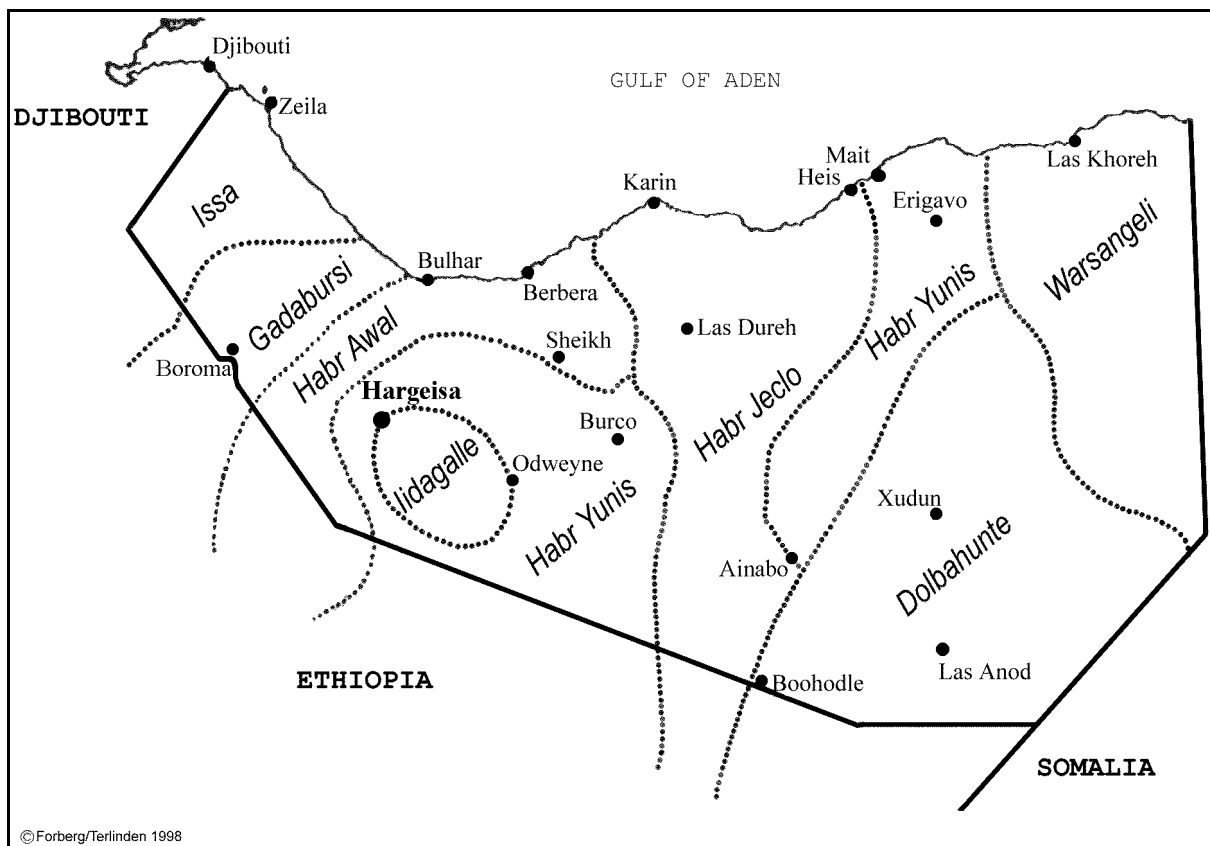
Box 1: CLANS IN SOMALILAND AND RESPECTIVE POLITICO-MILITARY MOVEMENTS



⁶ This assumption is based on various discussions with ex-patriates who have dealt with government-related project proposals, and on our own reading of these documents. High population figures legitimize bigger grant requests. Vaidyanathan (1997) puts the figure for the five regions of Somaliland at 1,014,000 people.

The people of Somaliland comprise five main clan groups, with the Isaaq being the biggest clan family among them. The most important sub-clans of the Isaaq are the Habr Yunis and Iidagalle (which together make up the Garxajis), the Habr Jeclo and Habr Awal (the latter are subdivided into the Isa Musa and Saad Musa). The Gadabursi and Issa live in the west of the country (Awdal region), and both are sub-clans of the Dir. The Dolbahunte in Sool and the Warsangeli in Eastern Sanaag are both sub-clans of the Harti (Darod), which are related to the Majeerteen (who live in the neighbouring North-east of Somalia). (See Bradbury 1997, 20; Touati 1997, 242 and Box 1 and Box 2)

Box 2: MAIN AREAS OF CLAN SETTLEMENT IN SOMALILAND⁷



Livestock production and exports constitute the most important factor in Somaliland's economy. Other economic activities include the export of skins, aromatic gums and minerals. Somaliland produces fruits, vegetables, sorghum, maize, beans, and milk products for its internal market. The region has a high potential in fishing.

Chronology

Shortly after its independence in 1960, Somalia gave expression to its claim to unify all Somali peoples into one great "Somali empire". Speculation arose that this unity would only be an initial step in an effort to realise a "Greater Somalia"; to include all Somali territories and re-establish control over the *Haud* grazing lands in Ethiopia, a primary resource for Somaliland's pastoralists. Furthermore, it was surmised that parts of North-east Kenya and Djibouti would be incorporated.

⁷ Data taken from: Consultants from the London School of Economics (...) 1995, i. Based on I.M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, 1st edition 1955.

Box 3: THE MILITARISATION OF SOMALIA⁸

The army became the most powerful institution in the country under the Barre regime. During the Ogaden war (1977/78), the armed forces grew to a record size of 54,000 men under arms. In some years, the share of military equipment accounted for 98.4% of the total import volume (Lefebvre 1991, quoted in: Touati 1997, 201). By the beginning of the 1980s, the government spent nearly three-quarters of its budget on "security", consuming more than half of Somalia's export earnings (Bradbury 1997, 6).

The USSR was Somalia's most important military supporter before the Ogaden war. The Soviets not only provided weapons⁹, they also set up their own military bases, of which the air strip of Berbera (with a length of 5 km and an ability to serve any plane, including heavy bombers) was one.

Other (military) support to Barre came from Saudi-Arabia, Egypt, Italy, Germany, the USA, China, Pakistan, Libya, France, Kuwait and South Africa during the following years. During the Ogaden war, Somalia also received weapons from Iran, Iraq, Jordan; plus some stocks of old Egyptian and Sudanese weapons which Saudi Arabia paid for. The UAE and Oman equipped the Somali Air Force with fighter and transport aircraft.

When the relationship between the USSR and Somalia broke up, the United States moved in as Somalia's largest donor. By 1982, Somalia had become the third largest recipient of U.S. aid on the continent (Bradbury 1997, 9).¹⁰ Not only did the Americans make use of the ex-Soviet bases, they also improved Somalia's infrastructure (e.g. by expanding the military facilities at Berbera port and airport). The country is of high strategic importance because of its access to the Red Sea. The U.S. aid was designed to suit the military needs of the regime in Mogadishu¹¹.

The last two civilian governments of Somalia (1967 and 1969) were headed by an Isaaq premier - Mohamed Ibrahim Egal.

In 1969, a military dictatorship under General Mohamed Siad Barre replaced the democratic government. Also several Isaaq held posts in the cabinet under Barre.

⁸ The information provided in this box and the associated footnotes are solely for illustrative purposes. A complete description of military transfers to Somalia cannot be provided in this report.

⁹ Between 1967 and 1978, the USSR supplied a total of US\$ 300 million in weapons to the Somali government (Touati 1997, 191). The first transfers included a substantial number of T-34 tanks, armoured personnel carriers, MiG-15 and MiG-17 aircraft, small arms, and ammunition. Furthermore, Mogadishu received numerous more-sophisticated weapon systems, including MiG-21 jet fighters, T-54 tanks, SAM-2 missile defense systems, and modern torpedo- and missile-armed fast attack and landing craft for the navy (Somalia. Foreign Military Assistance (undated)).

¹⁰ According to Feinstein (1992) U.S. military aid between 1981 and 1992 totaled US\$ 295,9 million (this includes the Foreign Military Sales Program, Military Assistance Programme and International Military Education and Training; but does not include commercial sales). The article claims that there were not any U.S. transfers to Somalia between 1990 and 1992. However, this is questioned by another article (see: Somalia. Foreign Military Assistance (undated)).

¹¹ After the Somali National Movement started its attacks in Northern Somalia in May 1988, the U.S. supplied Somalia with US\$ 1.4 million worth of military equipment, which consisted of 1,200 M16 automatic rifles and 2 million rounds of M16 ammunition (Somalia. Foreign Military Assistance (undated)).

However, the general feeling was that none but the Southern Somalis were represented sufficiently in Somalia's politics.

The Isaaq, along with other northerners, were in favour of the war to reclaim the Ogaden from Ethiopia. In 1977, Somali troops invaded deep into the Ogaden. The West of Somaliland was one of two flanks in the attack. But the Somali forces soon were on the defensive since military aid from the U.S. failed to arrive and the Soviets provided Ethiopia with enormous supplies in a very short time¹².

A mass influx of 1.5 million Ogadeni refugees followed Somalia's defeat in 1978. A lot of them arrived in the North and posed a threat to the Isaaq's lands. Most of the refugees politically supported the Barre regime.

On the other hand, armed groups arose from the defeated forces which began to fight Barre. Subsequently, the regime began to target entire clans and economic groups associated with the insurgencies in human rights violations.

The "Somali National Movement" (SNM), an opposition movement based on the Isaaq clan, was founded in London on 6 April 1981. The movement established its headquarters in the Ethiopian Ogaden. Throughout the 1980s government policy towards the Isaaq became increasingly repressive. The Ogadeni refugees which had been armed by the government on Somaliland territory in the early 1980s began to fight the SNM.

Initially, the SNM was fighting alongside the SSDF, which is based on the Majeerteen clan from North-east Somalia and had also taken refuge in Ethiopia.

In an internal conflict in 1983, the military wing of the SNM pushed through against the civilian wing. In 1984, a new civil group was established under the chairmanship of Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo. During the following years, the chairman was regularly elected for terms of 2 years by an assembly of elders and selected members of the SNM council at the SNM headquarters. Furthermore, each of the meetings gave renewed legitimisation to the movement. In 1990, Abdirahman Ahmed Ali Tuur succeeded Silanyo as the chairman of the SNM.

The military wing of the SNM was divided into the "Red Flag" (Alan As) and the "Snipers" (Shish). The "Red Flag" was recruited from Habr Awal (Isa Musa and Saad Musa) and Habr Jeclo. Most of its officers had previously undergone training in the Eastern Bloc. The "Snipers" were derived from the Habr Younis and Iidagalle sub-clans (see Box 1).

The SNM began to fight the police and military, retreating to Ethiopia after each attack. In 1988, Somalia and Ethiopia agreed not to support each other's opposition movements any longer. Fearful of losing its refuge in Ethiopia as a result of this accord, the SNM attacked and briefly captured the cities of Burco and Hargeisa in May 1988. Somali government forces responded by launching a savage assault on the Isaaq population, forcing thousands to flee to Ethiopia. It is estimated that about 50,000 people were killed between May 1988 and March 1989 (Africa Watch 1990, quoted in: Bradbury 1997, 11). These brutal attacks finally united the Isaaq behind the SNM, which previously had not been widely supported by civilians. Nevertheless, government forces pushed the movement out of Hargeisa and Burco again in June 1989.

¹² The USSR brought in US\$ 1 billion worth of military aid, 1000-1500 military advisors, and 10,000-12,000 Cuban soldiers between November 1977 and March 1978 alone (Touati 1997, 193).

Many of the Isaaq soldiers in the government army had meanwhile defected to the SNM. The guerrilla force was able to maintain its position in the rural areas which it largely controlled until its final victory in 1991. However, the Gadabursi living in the West of the region continued to fight on Barre's side. In 1989, a Dolbahunte-based Somali United Liberation Front and the Gadabursi-based Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) were formed. Neither took part in the overthrow of the Barre regime. Members of the Issa clan founded the USF. An increasing number of these armed groups were formed across Somalia as the war escalated.

The leadership of the SNM, SPM and USC met on 6 August 1990 in Ethiopia and agreed to set up a joint front against Barre¹³. As a result, the SNM supplied weapons to General Mohamed Farah Aideed's USC. His forces needed this support because they were only equivalent to one quarter of the forces which were at the disposal of his enemies in the South of Somalia. Aideed took the war to Mogadishu on 3 December 1990 while Barre's forces were occupied in fighting the SNM in the North. Barre himself fled the capital on 26 January 1991. In early 1991, the SNM captured the cities of Burco (see Box 7), Berbera and Hargeisa. As a result the government forces fled through the Ogaden to Southern Somalia, while the Isaaq from the South were heading in the other direction, trying to reach Somaliland.

Ali Mahdi was appointed interim president by a "Manifesto Group" after the conquest of Mogadishu. However, the SNM were not consulted before this step, and neither did the other USC-factions support it. The SNM itself used a "Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples" in Burco on 18 May 1991 to announce the independence of Somaliland. Similarly, it did not consult the other political factions of Somalia about this step.

Abdirahman Tuur, the chairman of the SNM, became the first president of the Republic of Somaliland, which until now has not been recognised internationally. New violent clashes began in early 1992 in Somaliland. The Habr Younis (Snipers) unsuccessfully tried to capture Berbera, which was under Red Flag control, from Burco and Hargeisa.

After bitter fighting, including the second destruction of Burco, a group of elders representing the political clan leadership managed to settle the conflict and paved the way for a "National Reconciliation Conference". All clans of Somaliland were invited to this conference which began on 24 January 1993 in Boroma. Between 1,000 and 2,000 people participated in the consultations which lasted four months. At the end of this, a "Somaliland Communities Security and Peace Charter" was passed, which constitutes a "Code of Conduct" on questions of national security, taking into account traditional law (*xeer*). A "National Charter" defines the legislative structures of Somaliland. An Assembly of Elders (Guurti) as the upper house and an elected Assembly of Representatives as the lower house together form the parliament. The Guurti elected Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal, the former premier of Somalia, to be the new president of the Republic of Somaliland in June 1993. By October 1994, the Somaliland Shilling was introduced as the new currency.

New fighting took place around Hargeisa airport in 1994. The government used its newly formed army to fight access to the airport after negotiations with the lidagalle

¹³ The SPM is a politico-military organisation of the Ogaden clan (Darod), based in the very South of Somalia (Kismayo area). The USC was based on the Hawiye clan and fought the government in Southern and Central Somalia, including Mogadishu. It was later divided into factions, one of them loyal to General Aidid (USC-SNA), and another one following Ali Mahdi (USC-SSA).

militia failed. The government was seeking control over Burco after the successful conquest of Hargeisa airport. Burco is an important trade centre, particularly for livestock. The warring factions in the city were the Habr Jeclo (Red Flag) on the government's side and the opposing Habr Younis (Snipers). A huge part of Burco's Habr Jeclo citizens fled and set up a town of huts and tents in nearby Yerowe, which has since become the centre of trade for the region. Now, people have slowly begun to move back to Burco.

In 1995, the UN's acting representative financially supported the political come-back of Abdirahman Tuur (Habr Younis), who had lost the presidential elections in 1993. Tuur became a vice-president in Aideed's self-proclaimed government (Helander 1995, 2). Later, he denounced the secession of Somaliland, which he himself had declared (under public pressure and reportedly against his own will) during his presidency in Somaliland.

In August 1995 it was reported that the USF (Issa militia) and Somaliland government troops had engaged in new fighting close to the border to Djibouti (HAB 4/1995).

A series of inter-clan peace conferences took place in 1996, aimed at reconciliation of the lidagalle and Hargeisa clans. Another national conference (Shir Beeleedka or Congress of Clans) was called and an agreement passed on the (re-) election of the president and the new constitution (Bradbury 1997, 34).

In 1998, some of the Dolbahunte and Warsangeli sub-clans in Sool and Sanaag made efforts to join "Puntland", a self-declared autonomous region in North-east Somalia. Some members of the political clan leadership took part in the Puntland founding conference in Garowe.

2.2 Conflict Analysis

"Despite certain parallels with conflicts of the pre-colonial period, the current anomic condition of the Somali society ... cannot be explained with the simplistic extrapolation of traditional patterns of action. Rather than that, it is a process of social disintegration which began during the colonial period and which has continued - by no means in a uniform way - until today." (Touati 1997, 220, translated by the authors)

National Disappointment and Barre's Clan Policy

An important event in the course of this disintegration has been Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden war. Once the war ceased to conceal the disastrous condition of the society, it multiplied with the economic decline. The integrative effects which had been associated with the vision of a "Greater Somalia" disappeared. The humiliating defeat demoralised large parts of the population and led "to an upsurge of 'tribalism' as different groups sought scapegoats to explain the debacle" (Galaydh, quoted in: Touati 1997, 198).

At the same time, Barre was trying to protect his dwindling power position by persecuting and oppressing his political enemies. Thus, only Marehan (Barre's clan) were recruited for government posts and state services. Individual clans were labelled enemies of the central government and subsequently became subject to group persecution. The Majeerteen were the first clan to be punished collectively for the SSDF coup attempt in 1978. Barre began to "play the clan card" from then on,

contrary to the policy of "de-tribalisation" which he had proclaimed earlier. Regardless of the increasing misery of the Somali people and the enormous challenge that the huge number of refugees meant to Somalia, Barre massively armed his military forces again, in order to be prepared for a military engagement with his own opposition.

"Clanism" began to play an important role in public and private life after this time. The economically neglected North-west of the country, where the Isaaq live, was faced with massive human rights violations by the government after the foundation of the SNM. Isaaq were systematically superseded from politics and the military. Furthermore, their sources of economic income were cut off (especially by the ban on khat¹⁴ production in 1983). The Isaaq were confronted with a policy which aimed at their elimination. Barre also managed to mobilise other clans from the North-west region against the Isaaq, such as the Gadabursi (Dir) and the Dolbahunte (Darod).

The War against Barre and the Brutal Response

The brutal war which the Isaaq had to face after the initial attacks of the SNM laid the foundations for the later declaration of independence. Combined with the resulting physical and psychological wounds, it also accounted for most of the public support for the SNM. The Isaaq carried most of the burden of the fight against Barre.

The declaration of independence aimed at preventing renewed domination by the clans of Southern and Central Somalia. Moreover, it allowed the North-west to detach itself from the fighting which took place in the South after Barre's overthrow. The people of the North-west hoped to promote a more peaceful existence with this decision.

However, the idea of independence was not supported by the entire population of North-west Somalia. Support for this notion could only be generated on a clan or sub-clan basis. But the mistrust of other clans and their organisational structures, which has grown over time, initially prevented some parts of the clans from making such comprehensive agreements. The fear of being dominated by another clan, e.g. through administrative structures, is prevailing.

Furthermore, some of the Dolbahunte and Warsangeli in the Eastern part of the area refused and still refuse to support the idea of an independent Somaliland because they fear losing the solidarity of their clan fellows in the rest of Somalia by such a decision. A lack of external support could weaken their position in a potential future conflict with the Isaaq.

As such, the attempt to try to involve as many clans as possible in the process of independence is quite remarkable. Up to now, this process has led to a more stable situation in Somaliland than in the rest of the country.

The SNM itself began to play the "Clan card"

The roots of today's conflicts in Somaliland, and the reasons for the internal dispute over Somaliland's independence, have lain with the SNM from the beginning on. The movement did not address the problem of the future political order in the area during the years of its formation (see Touati 1997, 206). The question of how a pluralistic parliamentary system should take account of the influence of clan-loyalties remained

¹⁴ Khat is a leafy plant which many Somali men chew in the early afternoon. Khat acts as a mild amphetamine.

unanswered. How should the risk of fragmentation of the Somali society into micro-states be handled, and which mechanisms should be put in place to protect the legitimate interests of the various clans?

Initial attempts to provide the fight of resistance with the foundation of a broader clan alliance failed. The Hawiye, which had been allies, detached themselves from the SNM. Since then, the resistance movement has been exclusively based on the Isaaq (and limited to the North-west region) and has begun to contribute to the prevailing "clanism" with its nationalistic rhetoric (Touati 1997, 206). The SNM was not able to overcome traditional tensions between the Isaaq and other clans. It fought against the Ogadeni which had been in long-standing competition with the Isaaq over pasture and water resources in the *Haud*.

The military aspects of the way in which the Isaaq resisted the threat of the Barre regime reflected the condition of Somali society. For each SNM fighter, loyalty to his own sub-clan had priority over loyalty to the movement as a whole, making any joint military strategy of the force impossible. Subsequently, mainly sub-clan units fought together. Disputes over the cities to be "liberated" first illustrate the divisive sub-clan motivation of the fighters. The fact that factions individually seized the territory they captured laid the foundations for later conflicts within Somaliland. In particular, the seizure of large weapons and ammunition stores resulted in changes to the proportion of force for the different SNM groups. Tensions arose and infighting followed between the SNM militias of the North-west region.

Conflict over Resources

Access to resources were often fought over. While weapons and ammunition stocks (or supply lines) had been the object of dispute during Barre's time, the different factions began to compete over revenue income after the establishment of administrative structures (which is still occurring today). The port of Berbera, and Hargeisa and Berbera airports can be regarded as the most important of these income-sources. Berbera is of enormous strategic importance; due to the export of huge amounts of livestock via the port of Berbera, it raises the highest tax income in Somaliland. The revenues from the port, and other parts of the infrastructure, provide an ability to exercise political power. And the conquest of ports or air strips by force is one way of gaining this political power.¹⁵

Another important revenue can be raised through the control of the major transport routes. Roadblocks in Sool region are recent examples of this.

The Somaliland Shilling (and profit made by its control) is the object of another important resource conflict¹⁶.

The New Government rules alone

The authoritarian leadership style of President Egal united the clans which were not (or only marginally) represented in his government against him. The opposition clans often treat Egal's government as equivalent to the rule of his (Habr Awal) sub-clan. The clans opposed to Egal's government, particularly the Garxajis (Iidagalle and

¹⁵ One of Abdirahman Tuur's problems as president was that he did not have access to this income. Berbera is inhabited and controlled by Isa Musa. To the contrary, president Egal (Habr Awal) was in a position to use these resources for the consolidation of his power and acceptance.

¹⁶ Government revenues hardly cover 60 per cent of the annual expenditure. Heaps of new currency printed abroad are imported to cover the large deficit (Farah 1997).

Habr Younis), invested a lot in the fighting in 1992 and 1994/5. In particular, the Habr Younis perceive themselves to be excluded from power since then¹⁷. Elders of the Garxajis clan tend to describe the conflict as clan-based since they are not represented sufficiently in the government, whose policies, in their view, are dominated by the political and economic interests of the Habr Awal. Furthermore, they believe that only the "red flag"-wing of the SNM formed the government. The Egal administration refused to lead clan-based negotiations with the elders since it regards the conflict to be purely political in nature. It claims to represent a broad clan coalition (Bradbury 1997, 26).

The Relationship between the Clans and the Role of their Representatives have changed during the Conflict

Barre's policies, the war against him, and the fragmentation of the opposition have fundamentally changed clan relationships. The role of the elders, which had been abandoned entirely during the period of Marxist orientation of Somalia, is re-gaining importance. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms had been systematically superseded and no longer functioned. But the complex system of group relations of the clan system (see Box 4) is the only remaining basis for building a more or less stable political structure in Somalia. One example of (to some extent) functioning traditional structures in a society which is not organised as a state can be seen in the role of the Garaads (*leaders* or *chiefs*) in Las Anod (Sool). Although their structure today is not identical to the structure which used to exist before the war (the number of Garaads and the persons have changed), the Garaads enjoy the respect of the people and settle many matters of public life. Two important features are responsible for the functioning of this structure: First of all, Las Anod has a simple clan structure which involves only one clan (Dolbahunte) and its sub-clans. Second, no new administration has been set up, which could have started disputes. The clan alliances, and the groups of solidarity which grew out of these alliances, constitute the basis of the traditional structure.

Calls for kin solidarity have become suspect since clan loyalties were used as a means of personal enrichment and access to certain privileges (e.g. high and profitable posts in the government administration) during the Barre regime. Moreover, the traditional texture of the communities of solidarity has changed dramatically in the course of the violent conflicts. Today, communities of solidarity often only refer to sub-clans or sub-sub-clans. The spheres of influence of the elders and the range of their authority, e.g. regarding possible interventions for conflict resolution, have been reduced accordingly.

However, the decreased size of solidarity reference groups is also a challenge for the (on-going) construction of government administration. For the staff of the state security forces (police, military etc.), clan or sub-clan loyalty has a higher priority than state loyalty. During a conflict, the staff would mainly feel bound to their respective groups of reference, rather than feeling compelled to fulfil their duties or follow the orders of their "employer", the Somaliland state.

¹⁷ Some authors (et. al. Bryden 1995) emphasize that the majority of Garxajis clan members do not share Abdirahman Tuur's and Jama Yares' federalist position of a re-unified Somalia.

Box 4: THE STRUCTURE OF SOMALI SOCIETY

"Somali society is composed of units of kinship. The principle of assignment (to a group) is the paternal line of descent, while every male ancestor may be the origin of a new group of solidarity. Beginning from an extended family, the community enlarges with every past generation, up to the clans (of ten and more generations) and the six huge clan families. The six clan families include the whole Somali people, regardless of its national identity, hence including Somalis in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. It depends on the situation which unit constitutes the point of reference. Brothers keep themselves to themselves in a dispute, cousins drag in their brothers - the more distant the relationship between quarrelling people or groups is, the bigger will the unit be which serves as the community of solidarity."

(Kathrin Eikenberg, taz 13.10.93, translated by the authors)

The "Judicial System" versus the Monopoly of Force of the State

Treaties (*xeer*) which the elders of the clans or clan segments negotiate with each other regulate interclan relationships. Such treaties have determined the rights and duties of the clans for generations. Some of these treaties fix specific sums to be paid by clans in compensation for deaths or injuries resulting from interclan conflicts. This "blood law/justice" (*diya*) is the backbone of the traditional judicial system. Camels are frequently the means of payment for a *diya*. The elders determine the concrete damage which has been caused and the appropriate amount for the compensation. The case is closed after relatives have been compensated. Besides kinship, which produces solidarity, the legal maxims of treaties and compensation constitute the central institutions of Somali society (Eikenberg, taz 13.10.93).

One part of this judicial system is the principle of collective guilt. This can also be realised by revenge if the *xeer* system of compensation fails or when the victims of a crime prefer a "blood compensation". The guiding principle in such a case is to (re-)pay like with like. Blood revenge is not always just directed against the person responsible for the original crime, but also towards any other member of his/her family. The offence can be regarded as atoned for, even if the murderer has not (personally) been punished.

Acts of revenge are becoming more frequent as traditional structures (i.e. the authority of the elders) become less effective. Moreover, the proliferation of modern fire arms has led to a brutalisation of conflicts, particularly when crimes are called to account.

The traditional judicial system could play a crucial role in the process of dealing with past conflicts and preventing further bloodshed. If a mediation effort is made which is accepted by both sides, the conflicts can be settled by compensation. At the same time, clans are held responsible for the crimes committed by their members in the past.

The Society is changing

New lines of conflict are arising within Somaliland society which run counter to the old and clan-based problems.

The pastoral parts of society have changed dramatically during the last decades, especially because of the war. These developments can only be covered very briefly here, despite their essential importance for the future of Somaliland. Due to the increased production for export, the pastoralists now favour different kinds of livestock than before. This has had a negative impact on the environment, the nutrition of the pastoralists and their health (Bradbury 1996, 17). The degradation of the environment may constitute a new source of conflicts in the future, e.g. over pasture, settling areas or access to water. Most of all, these processes imply a change of social values which may undermine the ability of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to function.

The spread of the Al-Itihad movement led to another armed conflict (mainly in 1991), particularly in the Eastern part of the country. Influential islamists supposedly receive support from Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and Sudan (in the latter case including weapons and finance). A militant wing is said to have bought huge amounts of rifles and military vehicles (Gaus, Bettina, taz 10.12.1992 and 09.03.1993; JDW, Vol. 26 (1995), No. 14). Future political structures will have to take into account the strong buoyancy of these islamists. Al-Itihad has become an important factor in the economy - the movement is said to control much of the currency exchange business.

International Engagement

Since its foundation, Somaliland has never taken the international limelight. Receiving only little attention from foreign donors, the extent of international aid and political engagement from abroad has been small. The actions of international organisations have almost been irrelevant to the conflict dynamics at the macro-level during the years since Barre's overthrow. In particular in comparison to the South of Somalia, which has received a lot of external resources, this can be analysed as having had a positive impact on the more peaceful development of Somaliland¹⁸. Left on their own, the people in Somaliland tried to involve all the clans in the peace conferences which haven taken place since 1991. Out of the suffering caused by Barre's suppression and the war against his regime, there emerged the motivation to create a situation stable enough to bring about the international recognition of Somaliland. It was hoped that this in turn would ease access to international and bilateral aid. However, as yet Somaliland has not been recognised as a state.

The country has so far been spared from armed conflict over external (aid) resources. The insensitive procedure of UNOSOM II of beginning negotiations with Abdirahman Tuur two years after he had given up the presidency, however, led to a considerable escalation of tensions in Somaliland. Tuur's change of heart (suddenly opposing the idea of independence) occurred in part because of inducements from UNOSOM II, which was desperate to conclude a peace deal before leaving Somalia in March 1994 (Bradbury 1997, 26).

External support from other countries will be crucial for the further development of the country. The impact of aid, however, will depend on the way in which it takes account of the sensitive and complex social structure of Somaliland.

¹⁸ This view has also been expressed by the delegation of ministers which we interviewed in Erigavo / Sanaag region on September 6, 1998.

2.3 Definition of Regional Divisions

We visited different sites in the country, and accordingly would like to undertake an analysis of territory by area. The most important criterion for such an analysis is the control of the territory. It is useful to distinguish between the "Western" and "Eastern" parts of Somaliland.

We define the "West of Somaliland" as those areas which are at least under partial control of the government in Hargeisa. This includes the capital and the cities of Berbera, Sheikh, Burco and Boroma (unfortunately we did not visit the latter in our field trip) plus their surroundings (see map in Annex II). Burco has a special place in this list since the government does not seem to be in full control of the city. This is illustrated by the fact that the people in Burco still use Somali money, although the legal currency in the country is the Somaliland Shilling. Nevertheless, since the government appears to be in the process of taking full administrative control over the town, Burco is included in this part of the analysis. In the Sanaag region, a transition is currently underway. A government delegation of ministers and deputy ministers has invigorated the administration and seems to be successful in expanding government control over the Western part of Sanaag. This (Western) zone will therefore be covered in chapter 3 as well.

Chapter 4 includes information collected from Las Anod. Although the government has named regional representatives for Sool, they usually stay in Hargeisa and are not accepted by the resident people. Matters of public life are usually settled by the elders (Suldaans and Garaads). The same is likely to apply to the Eastern parts of Sanaag, which we were unable to visit.

The situation in regions West of Boroma is unclear. A dissident militia group from Djibouti used to be active in the area close to the border with Djibouti (and Ethiopia and Djibouti itself). However, according to unconfirmed reports, the group was expelled from Somaliland territory following an agreement of the governments of Djibouti and Somaliland. The group has reportedly been eliminated after an attack on a camp of the Djibouti Armed Forces in Dhikil. Since we did not cover this area in our field trips, it is not included in the report.

3. SMALL ARMS IN THE WESTERN PART OF SOMALILAND

3.1 Weapons Diffusion in the Population

With a few exceptions, nobody overtly carries a weapon in the areas visited in the Western part of Somaliland, neither day nor night. According to information provided by police officials in Hargeisa, armed men on the streets are very likely to be policemen in plain clothes¹⁹. Although we were unable to verify this information ourselves, it seems to be reliable²⁰. The police claims not to tolerate arms carried by civilians on the streets. The force appears to have a strong interest in maintaining a monopoly of force and in banishing weapons from the public.

However, the observation that the civilian population does not overtly carry weapons should not automatically lead to the assumption that in fact nobody carries a weapon. It may be difficult for a pedestrian to hide a Kalashnikov rifle, but a pistol or a revolver can easily be hidden under a jacket or in a waistband. Again, we were not able to identify such occurrences or estimate their frequency; and we never saw anybody hiding a weapon on the street. One estimate suggests the number of covertly-armed people on the streets to be around 20 per cent of the adult male population (Women Training Participants, Berbera). Bearing in mind the security situation of this Western zone, it is at least very likely that only a minority of the population goes armed.

Incidentally, it should be noted that a huge number of people walk the streets with big sticks and/or "traditional" daggers.

To estimate the number of small arms in rural areas is even more difficult, especially since we did not have an opportunity to interview nomads during our trips. The urban population (including most of the officials we talked to) usually suggested that all pastoralists possess small arms to take care of their livestock. However, we ourselves never observed pastoralists overtly carrying a weapon. Among other expatriates, an aid worker of Terra Nuova who spends a lot of his time with nomads in the bush told us that he has never come across fire arms during his field work. He reported that he does not agree that many pastoralists in Somaliland possess a fire arm. Taking into account the close links between the urban and rural populations in Somalia, the first statement is likely to have more foundation.

The appearance of small arms on the city streets does not at all reflect the possession of weapons by the population. It is very likely that small arms can be found in the majority of households in this region. This information has been confirmed by every single person interviewed during our trips. Based on discussions with various Somalis (Saed Essa Abdulle, Women Training Participants / Berbera et. al.), it is our estimate that around 70% of the adult male population possess at least one fire arm. These weapons are usually kept hidden at home.

The possession of small arms is exclusively the domain of men. Nevertheless, women have an important role in handling these weapons: Women often keep the men's arms hidden at home.

¹⁹ This has also been confirmed by Jack Klassen (1997, 5 -2.).

²⁰ Any false information in this respect would come to surface once the police has been fully equipped with uniforms and ID cards. This was due to happen until April 1998 but had not been realised by September 1998.

The main age-group of people possessing weapons is estimated to be between 15 and 35 years old.

The mechanisms by which weapons have been diffused to and among the population are complex. The list below is not complete, but it illustrates the variety of ways in which weapons have been transferred.²¹

Weapons in the civil population may have been

- bought on the black market (see 3.5)
- inherited
- given as a present by a bridegroom to his bride's family (traditionally)
- stolen from government stores after the fall of Siad Barre's regime
- handed out by the former government to the refugee population which came from Ethiopia (see 2.)
- kept by ex-soldiers of the Somali National Army (see 3.4)
- kept by ex-militias (see 3.4)

Not much can be said about the types of weapons in the population. The bulk of weapons must be rifles rather than machine guns, pistols or light weapons other than fire arms. This is a result of the source of the weapons (the army stockpiles) and the fact that rifles were particularly cheap when the market in Somalia was flooded with small arms. Most of these rifles must be versions of the AK, but the NDC staff also mentioned M14, M16 and SKS to be prevalent.

3.2 Weapon-related Incidents

As described above, Somaliland in general is an area that has been free from major armed conflict²² since 1996. However, apart from major bloodshed, quite a range of violent incidents involving small arms can be identified.

Most incidents constitute a form of armed crime, such as robbery, road blocks, kidnapping and, of course, murder. In the view of Saed Essa Abdulle of the New Hargeisa Police Station, the current level of crime in Somaliland is "normal". The lack of appropriate crime statistics makes it very difficult to challenge this statement.

According to the information provided by Saed Essa Abdulle, 12 people were murdered in Hargeisa during 1997. The Police Colonel estimated that 80 per cent of these murders were committed with a knife. Additionally, he stated that 6 armed robberies took place in 1997.

It is impossible to assess the quality of this information. First of all, because of the poor condition of the Somaliland Police Force, the number of unrecorded murders cannot be estimated. Second, no assessment of the actual number of crimes involving small arms can be made, as information on non-deadly bullet injuries is not available from the police. Third, in the same way, no estimate can be made of the situation in the rural areas because they are usually not covered by the police. (Saed Essa Abdulle told us that fighting in the bush is rare. However, if it took place, it would usually be over pasture land and access to water points between groups of nomads.) Finally, neither reliable information on the size of the Somaliland

²¹ The order given does not indicate a predominance of certain mechanisms.

²² Armed conflict defined as fighting which involves one or more regular or irregular armed forces, e.g. an army or a militia group.

population²³ nor the number of people living in a certain city is available. Such knowledge would inevitably be necessary to compare crime data of Somaliland with other settings²⁴.

Box 5: *EXAMPLES OF RECENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING SMALL ARMS*

July 3, 97: Six people were killed and 21 injured when gunmen indiscriminately opened fire in the centre of Burco (HAB 4/1997).

January 8, 1998: The outgoing mayor of Sheikh and his supporters attacked the local police station, killing a woman and wounding a man (HAB 1/1998).

March 13/14, 1998: A policeman of one sub-clan in Burco shot a member of another sub-clan. On the following day, the second sub-clan took revenge and shot the policeman.

March 29, 1998: "Gangsters" related to the former mayor fired bullets in the centre of Sheikh in the late morning (oral report from villagers).

March 30, 1998: Gunmen surrounded the compound of AICF in Yerowe (close to Burco).

April 26, 1998: The Minister of Finance of Somaliland, Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo, escaped an assassination attempt of a war veteran (Daily Nation, 27.04.98).

May, 1998: Four people were killed during a land dispute that escalated in a series of attacks, 16 km South of Gebiley.

It should be emphasised here that small arms play a critical role in acts of "revenge" (see 2. and Box 9).

Apart from these intentional acts, accidents with guns frequently cause injuries. This is particularly because of inappropriate storage of weapons at homes. Children sometimes have access to the rifles and pistols of their fathers. Several incidents in which children unintentionally killed or injured their relatives have been reported (Women Training Participants, Berbera).

The Berbera Hospital - the best equipped and biggest hospital in Somaliland - is said to have a huge catchment area including Burco and about half the road to Hargeisa. Burco itself used to have its own hospital, but it was destroyed in the course of the 1992 and 1995 wars.

The data of Table 1 are not sufficient for deeper analysis. Patients who die on the spot or on the way to the hospital are not recorded by the hospital. The number of such cases may be high since transport is problematic. And minor injuries (in rural

²³ In a pastoralist economy like the one of Somaliland, it is even impossible to define the "population" of the country, since nomads permanently leave and enter the country.

²⁴ It would have been possible to complement the information provided by the Hargeisa police with data on injuries from the Hargeisa Hospital. However, lack of time did not allow us to go through the administrative procedures necessary to obtain this information. Furthermore, the Hospital had only been reopened shortly before our visit and therefore may have only been able to provide statistics on a short period of time.

and far away places), likely to be only a very small number, may be treated by resident doctors or healers rather than the hospital in Berbera.

TABLE 1: PATIENTS WITH GUN SHOT WOUNDS AND LANDMINE CASUALTIES ADMITTED TO THE SURGICAL HOSPITAL OF BERBERA²⁵

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998
January	9	12	8	3
February	12	17	5	2
March	64	8	6	
April	82	5	9	
May	27	3	6	
June	44	15	4	
July	35	4	13	
August	17	2	8	
September	16	5	3	
October	11	5	4	
November	12	5	4	
December	14	n.a.	6	
total	343	81	76	

However, the long period of time covered in the Table at least allows for a comparison between the contemporary figures and those from the 1995 fightings. The period from March to July 1995 had a particularly high number of casualties, reflecting the fighting at that time. During each of the following 7 months, double figures of injuries continued to be recorded at the hospital. But since March 1996, the number of injuries only went above 10 in June 1996 and July 1997 (compare with Box 5 for the later date).

TABLE 2: 1997 REGISTRATION OF PATIENTS WOUNDED BY BULLETS (ANS/HI DISABLED REHABILITATION CENTRE, HARGEISA²⁶)

Date of Injury	Number	Origin of Patients
1988	8	3 from Hargeisa, 2 from Sheikh, 1 from Gebiley, 1 from Odweyne, 1 from Berbera
1989	1	1 from Odweyne
1990	1	1 from Hargeisa
1991	1	1 from Burco
1992	-	
1993	1	1 from Odweyne
1994	1	1 from Burco
1995	2	1 from Hargeisa 1 from Gebiley
1996	4	4 from Hargeisa
1997	2	2 from Hargeisa

²⁵ The number of landmine casualties in these figures is estimated to be around one or two per month.

²⁶ Data prepared by Abiib Ahmed, Physiotherapist Assistant; Note: The origin of patients is not necessarily identical with the place of the incident.

<i>total</i>	21	
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Another way to measure the use of arms is by the number of people who were disabled by a bullet injury. Table 2 displays such information, obtained from the Action Nord Sud/Handicap International project in Hargeisa. However, a large number of people seeking rehabilitation at the project today were injured a long time ago. Therefore, the data are rather an indicator of the long-term impact of small arms on the society than of current incidents involving these weapons. In addition to this, the group of people actually benefiting from the services of this Rehabilitation Centre is too small to provide useful analytical data.

3.3 The Police Force

The Somaliland Police Force is said to be about 4,000-4,500 men strong (Cabdul Kadir Moosa), of which 660 policemen are on duty in Burco (850 in Togdheer altogether), 370 in Erigavo (505 in Sanaag altogether (Ahmed Mohamood Mohamed)), 200 in Berbera (Saed Essa Abdulle/ Cabdul Kadir Moosa) and 40 in Sheikh (Aden Nur Abdi). In the Ainabo area, the police force was reinforced in March 1998 and is said to be particularly strong.

The total number of policemen in Somaliland is going to be reduced to 2000. There must have been discharges of policemen already, however, we do not have information on the total number. The Berbera police had been reduced from 440 to 200 by February 1995 (HAB 2/1995, p.23).

Besides a small number of long-serving policemen, the large majority of policemen are ex-militias (about 90%). In Burco, we were informed that the Somaliland government had ordered that the relative proportion should be 80% ex-militias to 20% police who had served before the war. Some militias joined the army and were later transferred to the police. The youngest policemen we saw in Somaliland were in their late-twenties.

Payment for the police is rather low. It comprises some 7-13 US\$ a month and various small food packages (e.g. a few kilos of rice). Only a small minority of 5 - 10% of the policemen wear uniforms, and even some of these are privately owned. In cities like Hargeisa, the population often identifies its police by the fact that they carry weapons (rather than by a uniform).

Police Weapons and their Control

All of the militias (and the policemen likewise) have to bring one weapon with them when they join the force. According to Saed Essa Abdulle, all of these arms have now been registered and they are now in the possession of the Somaliland Police Force. In theory police officers do not get their weapons back on leaving the force. However, police officials in Burco informed us that the ex-militias in the police force are still in the possession of their guns, and that they keep their weapons with them in case they are discharged from the force. Saed Essa Abdulle later explained this contradiction to us in terms of the organisational condition of the force in Burco, which according to him has not yet decided on the procedures for discharging officers. Two deputy commanders of the Burco police told us that they regard weapons collectively owned by the police as a solution to the problem of light weapons proliferation in the society.

The police commanders in Hargeisa admitted that each of their men may have several weapons at home, besides the one they turned in. However, the commanders view that these arms are not their "business".

Only a small amount of weaponry has been inherited from former government stockpiles. The Somali police force used to enjoy German training and material aid for a long time. Police officers were trained to handle the German G3-rifle, its standard weapon at that time.

The ex-militias have been the major source of weapons and ammunition supply for the police. Therefore, the current arsenal of the police contains a wide range of different light weapons today. These weapons include hand-held guns, rifles and submachine guns. We also observed some (rather old) machine guns, however, we were not able to identify them. The police also possesses a small number of so-called "technicals", vehicles with a mounted machine gun or anti-aircraft weapon²⁷. A variety of AK/AKM versions accounts for approximately 70-80% of the arms which can be observed in the streets.

The Somaliland police claims not to have bought weapons or ammunition (e.g. from foreign sources) yet, but it is considering doing so in future. However, this is not likely to happen soon, because of the financial constraints of the Somaliland government.

The police does not have a central workshop or technician for the maintenance of its weapons.

The regulations regarding weapons vary between each of the police sections and places of operation. With the exception of the traffic police, policemen on the streets of Hargeisa, Berbera and Sheikh often carry rifles. These rifles are taken from a central police store for times of duty only. At night, all police patrols carry a weapon. Policemen have to report on the whereabouts of their ammunition.

The force in Burco seems to be regularly armed during day and night service and it is not likely that these weapons are kept in a central store at any time.

One of the major tasks of the police is the enforcement of the laws regulating the possession, trade, production, use and carrying of weapons. For example, the police has ordered the people not to fire bullets during this years big "*Eid*" celebrations, marking the end of the Muslim ramadan. Consequently, no bullets have been fired this year, the police stated.

Section 3.6 will deal with the details of weapons control efforts of the police.

According to statements from the police and military commands in Hargeisa, the relationship between the "National Army" and the Somaliland Police is good. Both commands regard the police as responsible for internal security and the army as a protection against external threats. The commander of the National Army told us that the police may call the military to aid in specific situations, which so far has not happened.

Beyond the level of formal declarations, the distinction between the duties of the forces does not seem to be absolutely fixed. For example, the head army commander told us that his soldiers may arrest somebody carrying a weapon in

²⁷ According to Klassen (1997, 12 - 2.), at least three of the vehicles of the Hargeisa Police Headquarters are light trucks with heavy weapons.

public without a license. However, he stated that the accused would swiftly be transferred to the police - with his gun.²⁸

3.4 Military Forces

We could not find evidence of any active military force in the area which we defined as the Western zone, apart from the "National Army" of Somaliland. However, many of the former militias "self-demobilised" and went back to civil life, taking their weapons with them. They may not be a military force as such, but in some areas, ex-militias may easily gather to become a force, should political or economic "needs" arise. Since the status of the soldiers of the National Army does not seem to differ very much from the status of the self-demobilees (except for their payment and "title"), we will include here the ex-militias outside the army as "military forces" in the broader sense. The self-demobilees received their weapons from the same sources as the other militias, they will therefore not be mentioned separately in this chapter.

The National Army of the Republic of Somaliland

Similar to the Police Force, the National Army was recruited from the former militia forces in Somaliland (see 2. for details about these militias). The bulk of the soldiers must have come from the "Red Flag" wing of the SNM, because these forces were loyal to President Egal, under whose administration the army was founded. The process of "recruitment" or "integration" of other militias was part of the administration's demobilisation strategy. A National Demobilisation Commission (NDC) was set up to oversee the process of discharge of the ex-combatants from the army and their reintegration into civil life (see 3.7 for details).

We only have concrete figures for two groups which were integrated into the National Army of Somaliland. The Reer Isahaaq clan militia (a sub clan of Habr Younis) joined the National Army in February 1995 with 360 men. It had been operating along the Hargeisa-Berbera-road before (HAB 2/1995). At the beginning of 1997, 400 militiamen from communities West of Burco were incorporated into the National Army with their heavy weapons. The "dissident militiamen of Force 111 of the SNM former guerrilla army [had] rebelled against Egal's regime in November 94" (HAB 1/1997). According to Ismael Mohammed Osman, Commandant of the National Army, about 30-50% of the former SNM fighters joined the new force (up to early 1998).

We witnessed the on-going integration of clan militias in Sanaag region (see photos). The delegation of ministers which President Egal sent to Erigavo seems to accomplish its goal of strengthening its "national" structures in Sanaag. In a ceremony which we attended on September 5, 1998, around 100 men of the Habr Jeclo and some of their vehicles were incorporated into the army. The Defence Minister, was present and demanded the integration of another group of the same size from the clan elders of the Habr Jeclo. A group of Warsangeli was expected to join in soon after our departure.

Figures given for the current size the army vary considerably. The Somaliland Republic's Defence Minister Yusuf Ali Aynab Muse said that the army has a strength

²⁸ Klassen (1997, 12 - 2.) states that the technicals stored at the Hargeisa Police Headquarters are "a rapid response capability in the event of attack on the city", showing that the distinction between police and military may not be strict from the police's side either.

of 12,840, with a further 1726 reservists.²⁹ The deputy-commander of the Somaliland Police Force, Cabdul Kadir Moosa, puts the number at approximately 12,000 to 13,000 men under arms. According to him, this figure is to be reduced to 7000. The NDC estimated the number of soldiers to be around 20,000. And Tom Guggenheim, Demobilisation Consultant of the SCPRP, estimated the army to be around 6000-7000 soldiers strong. Bearing in mind the fact that government officials tend to exaggerate when it comes to the size of their force (not the least for reasons of military secrecy), and taking into account the poor financial condition of the Egal administration, Tom Guggenheim is likely to be right. Moreover, we were told that the number of soldiers in the army increased considerably (to up to 25,000 men) in official statements after UNDP announced its plans for renewed demobilisation efforts.

Furthermore, the "quality" of this quantity has to be examined. According to Guggenheim and other sources, the men are usually not present in the camps to which they belong. They do not receive a training or military drill. The soldiers only show up to receive their low payment (7 to 13 US\$ and/or some in-kind payment, the same as for the police). Another source added that most of the soldiers, especially in the higher ranks, do not wear uniforms or shoulder flashes. This was interpreted as a reluctance to show full loyalty to the National Army, which implicitly would have meant giving up clan loyalty and clan protection. It seems that the army is more of an umbrella organisation than a military force as such. Soldiers' loyalties are primarily to the clan and sub-clan³⁰, but the fighters may stand together if they have a common cause. This situation in the army is caused by the social order of Somali society. However, the way in which the army has been recruited also has not helped in building a unified force.

Although we have not been able to proof information on the state of the army ourselves, the impression we received during four visits to the army headquarters, which are also supposed to be a military camp, tends to confirm the views of Guggenheim and the other sources.

²⁹ HAB (2/1998), based on information from "Jane's Information Group".

³⁰ In the words of Mohammed Buraleh Ismail: "The army soldiers have stronger ties with their own tribes than with the National Army."

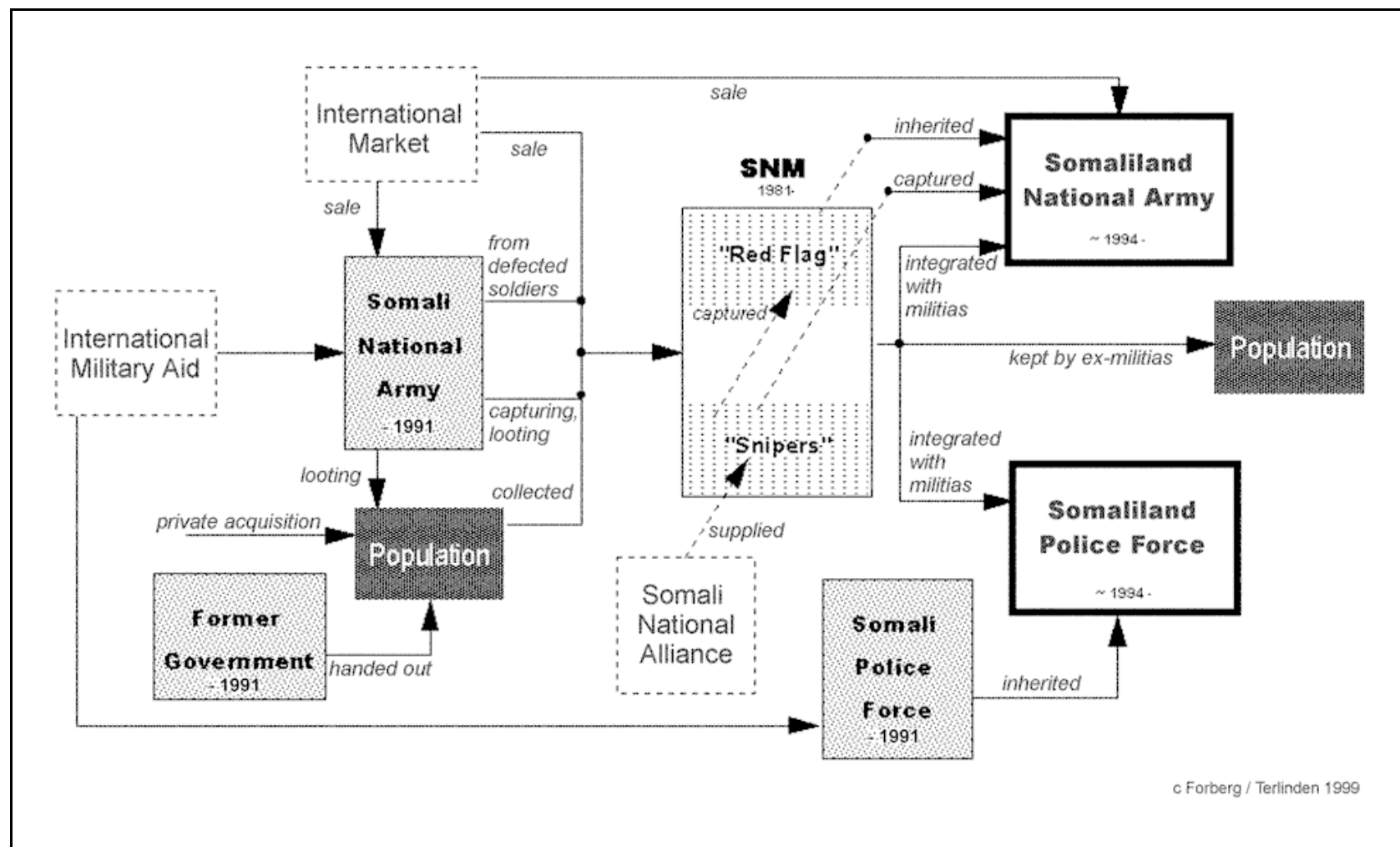
A GROUP OF HABR JECLO MILITIAS AT THEIR INTEGRATION CEREMONY



TWO OF THE "TECHNICALS" BELONGING TO THE INTEGRATED MILITIA



Box 6: MAJOR ARMS FLOWS IN SOMALILAND SINCE THE EARLY 1980S³¹



³¹ Apart from the flows indicated here, (private) trade of weapons has taken place at all stages of the conflict.

Weapon Supplies to the new Army

A huge part of the army's weapon stockpiles must be very similar to those of the police. Like the police, the army demanded every ex-militia to present a weapon when they joined the military. This recruitment of (mainly ex-SNM) militias must have been the main source of supply for the force. Some of these ex-militias were later transferred to the police, but a substantial number of soldiers was directly discharged from the military. It could not be clarified whether these soldiers left their weapons with the military or not, since we do not know when the army introduced its control mechanisms. If effective controls had been in place for a long time, it is very likely that the army would have received many more fire arms through the "integration" of ex-militias than it has soldiers today. The ratio weapons versus soldiers is certainly going to increase, should the army realise its plans to further reduce the force.

Another major source of weapons supply to the new army may have been stockpiles of the SNM (see Box 7). It should be examined how this force handled its weapons. Did the SNM command maintain its own weapon caches, apart from the weapons of individual fighters? Only in that case could arms stockpiles have been inherited by the subsequent National Army Force of Somaliland.

The new National Army of Somaliland itself has also *captured* an unspecified number of weapons in the wars with different militias in Somaliland between 1992 and 1996.

TANKS IN THE BURCO MILITARY CAMP, APRIL 1998.



At the end of 1994, the National Army seized 32 artillery pieces when it defeated the lidagalle militia at Hargeisa airport (HAB 2/1995). Small arms are likely to have been

among the captured weapons, although they are usually not mentioned in reports. In the middle of August 1995, a tank is said to have been captured from the "Somali National Movement Alliance" (SNMA) at the Airport (HAB 4/1995). And according to Abdillahi Hussein Imam, Ex-Defence Minister of Somaliland, the army captured "a tank, two armoured vehicles and many weapons" during a day-long battle around Burco at the end of January 1996 (HAB 1/1996). In many of these events, militiamen have been captured with their personal light weapons.

Box 7: WEAPON SUPPLIES OF THE SNM FACTIONS

The SNM factions must have had very many different routes of weapons supply, however, only very little factual knowledge is available.

It is known that many SNM soldiers of the earliest days returned with a weapon from the Ogaden war. Later, the elders of the region asked the population to hand in their personal weapons for the struggle of the SNM against the Barre regime.

Another huge amount of weapons must have been captured or looted from the former government forces and their allied militias before and during 1991³². The SNM used to ambush government forces at river crossings.

Emmanuel Deisser reported two different examples of this to us. In one incident, the SNM captured a big camp of the Somali National Army in Oadadlay. Barre subsequently ordered his forces to fly an air raid on its own camp to destroy the weaponry.

When the SNM took Burco in 1991, the Habr Jeclo (Red Flag) Forces approached the city from the East. They took over the military camp which is close to the airport in the Eastern part of Burco and found what one source described as a "gold mine" of weapons, including some major weapon systems.

And, last but not least, many soldiers (Isaaq) from the Somali National Army defected to the SNM in the course of the war. A prominent and perhaps decisive defection was made by Omar Jess (in November 1989) with his combat-ready, experienced units of several hundred men, including arms, vehicles, communication equipment and other hardware (Deisser).

The SNM is also said to have bought weapons from the international market. Besides which, there is a suspicion that Ethiopia supplied military aid to the SNM.

During Abdirahman Tuur's time as the president of Somaliland before 1993, the Habr Younis forces attempted to capture Berbera from Burco (and also from Hargeisa). Both attempts failed, and when the militias returned from Sheikh to Burco, they were forced to give up their weapons in Habr Jeclo territory (the above mentioned East of the town). This and similar incidents indicate that weapons have also been transferred "within" the SNM.

³² According to a NDC report of February 10, 1994, "it is known that some 60 percent of the heavy weapons of the former Siad Barre forces were concentrated in Somaliland at the time of his overthrowal" (HAB 3/1994). However, that does not necessarily indicate that 60% of the Somali forces or their light weapons were also there.

During the war between the SNM factions, the Somali faction of General Aideed (USC-SNA) is said to have supported the lidagalle militia at Hargeisa airport with arms and ammunition in 1994 (HAB 2/1995).

In contrast to the police, it is very likely that the army *bought* weapons and ammunition on the international market during the years 1994-95. According to press reports, the government confirmed an order for 35 tons of arms and ammunition on January 7, 1995. The weapons were taken from Luanda/Angola to Berbera by an Ilyushkin 76 which carried the registration number KA 7683 and had the call sign EPA 042/41. The report said the operation had been mounted by Trans Avia Travel Agency of Sharjah (UAE)³³.

Another report said that "Egal finally mustered sufficient money and arms to go on the offensive against a rebel militia unit from the lidagalle sub-clan..."³⁴. The report speculates on arms acquisitions, mainly Kalashnikovs and ammunition, which Egal claims to have bought from Albania. According to the president, North Korea also agreed to supply arms but was unwilling to fly them in, the way that the Albanians allegedly did it. It is not clear whether this is the same consignment that was mentioned in the first report.

Bradbury (1997, 25) states that the government supposedly spent 4.5 million US\$ re-equipping the army with weapons from Eastern Europe.

According to rumours, President Egal asked Israel for, among other things, military aid at the end of 1996 or early 1997 (HAB 6/1995).

TABLE 3: LIGHT WEAPONS OF THE FORMER NATIONAL ARMY OF THE "DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA"³⁵

Pistols	1	2	Sub-machine guns	1	2	Rifles	1	2	Machine Guns	1	2
7.62 mm vz/52	X	X	9 mm Sterling [Mark4]	X	X	5.56 mm SAR80 ^b	X	X	7.62 mm AAT-52	X	X
7.62 mm Tokarev	X	X	9 mm Uzi	X	X	5.56 mm M16A1 ^c	X	X	7.62 mm RPD ^b , RPK	X	X
9 mm Makarov	X	X	9 mm Beretta M12	X	X	7.62 mm Ak-47, AKM ^{a, b, c, d}	X	X	7.62 mm SGM	X	X
.38 Enfield No.2		X	9mm Beretta M38		X	7.62 mm vz/58	X	X	7.62 mm RP-46	X	X
			9 mm vz/23, 25	X	X	7.62 mm M14 ^c	X	X	12.7 mm DShK [38/48]	X	X
			7.62 mm PPS43		X	7.62 mm G3 ^{a, d}	X	X	0.50 Browning M2HB	X	X
			7.62 mm PPS41		X	7.62 mm .30 M1 / M2 carbine		X	7.62 mm M73 armor MG		X
						7.62 mm SKS45 carbine ^{a, b, c, d}		X	7.62 mm DP series MGs		X
						7.62 mm vz.52 rifle		X	7.62 mm PKT armor MG		X
						7.62 mm BM59 rifle		X	7.62 mm Type 67 GPMG		X
						7.7 mm .303 SMLE MK III and Enfield No.4 rifles		X	7.7 mm .303 Mark 1 Bren LMG		X
						7.62 mm Sturmgewehr 44		X	7.62 mm MG34		X
						7.62 mm SAFN rifle		X	7.62 mm MG42		X
						7.62 mm Mauser 98K rifle		X	.50 M85 armor MG		X

Sources: 1) Jane's Infantry Weapons 1995/96 (Gander 1995), 2) Ezell 1988

^a Weapons which we observed in the hands of Somaliland Army soldiers.

^b Weapons in the hands of the population of Las Anod (observations of the authors and Garaad Chani). For other types, see 4.1.

^c Weapons in the hands of the population of Hargeisa (observations of NDC staff)

^d Weapons which we observed in the hands of the USP militia force in Las Anod

³³ Indian Ocean Newsletter, 11.02.1995, p.5, quoted in: HAB 1/1995, p.23

³⁴ Africa Confidential, March 31, 1995, p.6, quoted in: HAB 2/1995, p.23

³⁵ For remarks on the reliability and comprehensiveness of this information, please see the reference books cited.

Types of Weapons

Not much can be said about the types of weapons in the stockpiles of the army. The bulk of these weapons must be different versions of the AK, as for the police. Apart from these, there is a wide range of weapons. To illustrate this, we provide a list of the variety of weapons which were in the stockpiles of the former government army by the end of the 1980s (Table 3). Many of these weapon types must have sooner or later entered the Somaliland National Army's current inventory through one of the transfers described above.

Some of the weapons listed in Table 3 are quite old. Although we cannot confirm that these fire arms continue to be in use, we would like to stress that this could well be the case. Fire arms possess a high durability.

Quite a lot of information is available on weapons supplies to the Barre regime, especially from the Former Soviet Union, the United States, Italy and Germany. But since we lack information on concrete transfers of former government weapons to the SNM, we will not cover these supplies in detail.

Weapons Control

Just like the weapons of the police, the army weapons have been registered in the camps. According to Ismael Mohammed Osman, fire arms and ammunition are only handed out to the soldiers for specific tasks. They are controlled by the head of the respective camp and clearly belong to the military. Discharged soldiers are not be allowed to take their weapons with them.

Saed Essa Abdulle, as reported by Ismael Mohammed Osman, stated that the soldiers would not even be allowed to enter a city if overtly carrying their weapons, unless they had received a permission from the police. He claimed that the police would arrest any soldier violating this regulation.

3.5 Arms Market, Trade, Production and Prices

Local Trade

All the people we interviewed stated that the current weapons commerce in Somaliland is not particularly strong. Saed Essa Abdulle described the population to be in a "wait and see" state of mind, in which weapon-owners keep the weapons which they acquired at an earlier time, e.g. during the armed conflict, but do not trust the peaceful situation in Somaliland enough to sell their arms.

If trade is taking place, it is usually because people are in need of finance and sell (one of) their personal weapon(s) because of its high value. A few may even sell a weapon because they no longer feel a need for it. Likewise, the demand for small arms seems to be relatively small. Weapons may be bought to replace other weapons. Or adolescents may acquire their own weapon when starting families. Furthermore, weapons have become an object of venture.

Accordingly, trade is usually on a small scale, with the number of weapons involved ranging from one to five. Unlike Mogadishu, where weapons are traded overtly on the Bakara Market³⁶, the trade in Somaliland is taking place on a hidden black market and involves brokers. Almost everybody we met claimed to know the way this

³⁶ The public trade of weapons started at the latest in 1992 and is ongoing. From all we know, the UNOSOM II - mission did not have an impact on this practice.

black market works. People simply ask around carefully to find a broker who then organises a secret deal.

Interregional Trade

Above the level of "internal" or "local" markets of a particular city or district, some interregional trade is taking place. In such cases, traders from the "demand region" travel to a place which is known to have a weapons market, particularly those where prices are low at that time. The traders buy weapons, sometimes upon order, and sell them in the place they come from.

Naturally, both the local and interregional trades are linked, but in the part of Somaliland referred to as the Western Zone local supply and demand are likely to be either balanced or have a surplus. Hence, the bulk of the interregional trade is likely to leave or cross this area rather than supplying the Western part of Somaliland³⁷. Thus Aden Nur Abdi from Sheikh also claimed that the people of his town now sell their weapons to the South of Somalia or other places. However, there will always be exceptions to this, where local tensions arise, e.g. in places like Burco.

We learned that especially anti-aircraft weapons seem to be traded from the West of Somaliland (Hargeisa) to the South, particularly to Mogadishu. Tom Guggenheim also mentioned that he had been offered warheads for anti-aircraft missiles in Hargeisa.

One might expect that the interregional trade of weapons is likely to involve greater numbers of weapons in each deal than the local trade. However, we often heard examples such as "a woman may buy 2 rifles in place X, carry them in her bag and sell them in place Y...". Although checkpoint controls within the zone appear to be random and quite superficial, traders may prefer to run smaller risks with only a small number of weapons. Even more so, since fire arms are high value items and the discovery of a prospective arms deal may result in the loss of a substantial amount of money.

Regarding the interregional or international trade of weapons, two "infrastructure features" should be highlighted here: the khat trade and the port of Berbera. Khat is transported to the most remote areas of Somaliland with highly sophisticated logistics on a daily basis. Khat planes, trucks and 4WDs would also provide excellent means of transport for the trade of weapons.

The port of Berbera has to be mentioned here as the most important entry point for imports apart from the roads from Djibouti and Bossaso (for the Eastern part of Somaliland).

The NDC staff stressed the role of camels and donkeys in the transport of weapons. Involving pastoralists or not, these animals may be used to avoid police and customs controls at checkpoints along the roads.

Women seem to have an important role in the arms trade, especially in the transport of weapons and ammunition. This is largely due to the fact that women are less likely to be subject to controls and hindrance than men. Regarding their role in trade during the war against Siad Barre, Bradbury (1997, 39) states that:

³⁷ Nevertheless when weapons enter Somaliland from the outside, the main foreign sources are likely to be Ethiopia and Yemen.

"Able to travel in Somalia more freely than men, women maintained channels of communication and were extremely important as traders. In the Ethiopian refugee camps Isaaq women established trading networks that ran between the Persian Gulf, Djibouti, and Mogadishu."

Although some of these "logistical" roles may have been taken over by men after the war, women seem to continue to play an important role in the trade of weapons (Zeinab Hassan Mohammed). Their involvement in the trade of other goods enhances their ability to hide difficult goods such as arms.

Box 8: A RECENT EXAMPLE OF SMALL-SCALE AMMUNITIONS TRADE

Around October 1997, a woman from the interior of Hargeisa bought ammunition for rifles on the Hargeisa black market. She acquired these bullets because "they were needed" in a city across the border in Ethiopia where her daughter lived. The ammunition was covertly sent to the city in a food bag which was transported by car. The driver and the guards of the car were not aware of their load. They delivered the bag to the daughter of the woman who had bought the bullets. It was then discovered that the ammunition was not of the right type, so the bag had to be brought back to Hargeisa.

On its way back, the car was stopped in Somaliland and the luggage was searched. After the police discovered the ammunition, the drivers of the car took the police to the original woman, who frankly admitted her involvement in the deal. The police demanded to be taken to the original source of the ammunition, which turned out to be an army soldier selling ammunition on the black market. The accused was arrested and the woman released with a warning.

(told by Zeinab Hassan Mohammed)

Prices

The price estimates given in Table 4 should not be seen as more than indications. For reliable up-to-date information, a survey of prices on the black market would have to be made for a period of at least some months, because prices may vary considerably.

TABLE 4: ESTIMATES OF PRICES OF LIGHT WEAPONS IN HARGEISA

Person interviewed	Weapon	Price in US\$
Cabdul Kadir Moosa	AK 47	100-150
Mohammed Abdi Allamagen	AK 47	250
Saed Essa Abdulle	AK 47	200-300
Tom Guggenheim	AK 47	100-200
	Beretta Pistol	300

We suspect that these estimates are based on weapon acquisitions (or at least negotiations for such transactions) which took place before our interviews. The variations may be due to the date of these negotiations, the quality of the weapon in question, and the ability of the respective person to negotiate. Nevertheless, during our trip the price of an AK 47 seemed to be around US\$ 200.

Although not very well based, these price estimates suggest that the market is not very active. The market does not seem to be flooded with weapons (which would be very likely if the price was down to 10 or 20 US\$).

3.6 Established Law, Social and Traditional Control of Weapons

Law and Law Enforcement

The principal law covering the ways in which weapons have to be handled is the Public Order Law. Its regulations are quite similar to those common in most European countries. Thus production, trade, import, export, transport, carrying and possession of weapons is only legal with a license from the Ministry of Interior. The Somali Penal Code (Art. 539) defines the penalty a person may face for failing to keep a licensed weapon in custody. Even carrying a loaded gun in a place where there is an assembly constitutes a violation of this law³⁸.

Since the police is still in the process of turning a group of ex-militia fighters into a reliable police force, only some of these paragraphs have as yet been implemented. As an initial step, the police have been attempting to prevent people from carrying weapons overtly on the streets. According to police procedures, anyone carrying a weapon overtly on the street should be arrested, sentenced by a government court, and his weapon should be confiscated³⁹. However, Colonel Moosa stated that there had been no such case since 1994. True or not, the police seem to have been successful in removing weapons from the streets of many cities in the West (as described above). In Burco, where the government is currently trying to install a proper administration, the prohibition of weapons on the streets has been broadcast on radio.

Most if not all privately owned weapons are unlicensed⁴⁰, but since its resources are insufficient, the police does not enforce regulations regarding the possession of weapons. The police and military commands even turn a blind eye on the fact that most of its own men keep one or several unlicensed weapons at home. According to Saed Essa Abdulle, in the future the police would like to begin a system of voluntary registration of privately owned weapons. These weapons (except for those of the nomads) could then be collected and destroyed at a later stage, when the administration is in a position to guarantee private and public security. The commandant of the National Army even stated that the weapons in the hands of the population would be a kind of reserve for the government and later be transferred to it.

Under Siad Barre's regime, weapons control was very strict. People even needed to have a license from the Ministry of Interior for having a pistol.

The police claims that it is trying to implement the laws on the trade of weapons, however we could not verify this. Colonel Essa Abdulle could not provide us with information on the number of cases in which weapons have been seized from traders or details about these weapons. He said he believed that there had been no such

³⁸ Art. 541 of the Penal Code defines arms.

³⁹ Supposedly, this was also the case under Barre's regime (before the outset of the civil war) (Mohammed Buraleh Ismail).

⁴⁰ Kingma (1994, 17) mentions that "in the business area of the capital Hargeisa, where often the security forces are not able to protect people's property, some businessmen are given special [weapon] licenses."

cases. We suspect that this lack of information is because of the low standard of accounting which the Somaliland police currently maintains. We learned of at least one case in which weapons smuggling into Somaliland has been discovered and pursued by the police (Box 8). Beyond that, it can be established that the measures to implement the prohibition of the arms trade are rather weak, since there are quite a lot of transfers across the region that escape detection.

The police did not tell us that they are concerned about the home production of ammunition. Weapons and ammunition are not produced at industrial scale in Somaliland.

Social and Traditional Controls

The attitude of the people in the streets and the efforts of the police to ban weapons from the public eye go hand in hand. In Hargeisa, we were told several times that people nowadays look down upon anyone *carrying* a fire arm. However, this attitude coincides with the expectation that every adult man has to have a weapon at home to defend his family or clan in bad times. The NDC staff suggested that the social control of weapons could in fact be the only effective way to maintain control over weapons. The people allegedly owned and traded weapons even during Barre's time, when controls are said to have been relatively strict⁴¹.

The traditional chiefs and elders have maintained some sort of control over small arms for a long time. This control or "authority" over weapons has many aspects. The chiefs, who are responsible for collecting the *diya* from their respective clan, know very well how many weapons each family possesses. At times, the chiefs may ask certain people in their community to acquire more weapons to safeguard the security of the clan. During the early days of the SNM movement, the clan elders reportedly called on their population to turn in weapons for the armed struggle against the Barre regime, as mentioned above (Abdi Jama, Oxfam).

And, last but not least, the *xeer* system limits the use of weapons by prescribing a blood compensation payment. We were told that even a death threat or the fact that somebody points a weapon at another person may result in the transfer of some camels from one clan to the other as a collective punishment. Elders even have the authority to prohibit people from carrying weapons on the streets (Abdi Jama, Oxfam)⁴².

It appears obvious that this kind of control, therefore, is not only a means of small arms containment, it may also be the driving force behind an armament process. The aspects mentioned above nevertheless illustrate the crucial role which the traditional system plays regarding arms control and disarmament initiatives.

3.7 Demobilisation

The major "demobilisation" effort in Somaliland has been accomplished by the former militias themselves: many of the ex-fighters simply went home after the end of the war and continued to do what they had done before the war. This is what the bulk of the soldiers did - whether they continued to receive a government "salary" or not.

⁴¹ This allegation may be seriously weakened by the fact that Barre's regime handed out weapons to the Ogaden refugees.

⁴² However, the extent to which elders push through with such prohibitions depends largely on the basis and the strength of their personal authority.

Besides this process of "self-demobilisation", some programme efforts have been undertaken by national and international agencies.

As mentioned above, it was the government's "demobilisation strategy" to first integrate the militias into the army (or the police) and then discharge them. This process was to be supervised by the National Demobilisation Commission (NDC) (founded in 1993) and supported by various UN agencies (especially UNDP), international NGOs and the German GTZ. According to Guggenheim (1997, 2), up to 3500 militia members have been disarmed in the course of these activities. However, NDC officials in Hargeisa told us that their efforts did not include separating fighters from their small arms. It is therefore unclear whether Guggenheim was referring only to major or also to light weapons.

Probably the most important task (and to some degree achievement) of the NDC was the decommissioning of heavy weapons⁴³. The Soyaal veteran group, which also received support from external agencies (the Swiss Group among them) carried out vocational training programmes and continues to do so.

After 1995/6, external financial support to the NDC ceased and since then its activities have stopped almost entirely. The NDC is still struggling for funding, however, no donor is currently in sight.

Apart from its support to the NDC, the GTZ also carried out its own demobilisation programmes between September 1994 and 1996, including small rehabilitation and employment projects.

Until recently, the Somali Civil Protection and Rehabilitation Project (a UNDP project) was planning to create a work force of 200 low- and medium- skilled demobilees to clean up rubble and debris. However, the project was cancelled in its initial stages.

Apart from these projects, it should be mentioned that about 150 ex-fighters are now working as watchmen for the compounds of international organisations and NGOs in Hargeisa. These guards are not armed.

Overall, it is very difficult to assess the real demand for demobilisation activities in Somaliland. The definition of who is to be regarded as a militiaman in need of demobilisation is at the heart of the problem. There are armed civilians (who do no harm), "self-demobilees", government soldiers (living in their community), armed criminals and so-called "active" militia groups (like the USP in Las Anod, see 4.4) - but which of these constitute "the problem"?

Estimates of the number of militias vary accordingly, since a clear distinction of various target groups is impossible (and, of course, the persons who make the estimates follow their own agenda at the same time). A Zimbabwean Consultant Team of UNDP estimated the target group for demobilisation to comprise 50,000 armed personnel (Zimbabwean Consultant Team 1993, 11). President Egal shares this position (Bradbury 1997, 23). The NDC in 1998 also estimated the target population to be around 50-60,000, taking into account "only regular armed personnel of the various military factions". According to the NDC, regular and irregular armed forces together would be around 100,000 persons (NDC 1998, 6)⁴⁴.

⁴³ InterAfrica Group (undated, 19) provides some insight on the early stages of encampment and heavy weapons disarmament.

⁴⁴ The NDC itself has only registered around 8000 of these militia. The data obtained have not been

However, an earlier NDC proposal (NDC 1994, 4 -2.) puts the number of "mujahidiin, militia and SNM veterans" at only 25,000 men. Ismael Mohammed Osman estimated that the number of militias was around 30,000 before the demobilisation (discharge from the military) began.

The two senior policemen who we met in Burco told us that they believe the number of militiamen in Togdheer region to be around 3000.

4. SMALL ARMS IN THE EASTERN PART OF SOMALILAND

The following chapters do not aim to describe the picture comprehensively, since in many regards, the "small arms situation" in the Eastern and Western parts of Somaliland are very similar. We will therefore only highlight the particular differences below or add information.

4.1 Weapons Diffusion among the Population

We observed a few people carrying rifles in Las Anod in the day and at night. It appears very likely that these men were not policemen since the police force in Las Anod is not operational (see section 4.3). Some of the people we interviewed indicated that it is still very common for some ordinary civilians (maybe "self-demobilees") to carry weapons in the streets. In one case, a civilian even presented a revolver from his waist band during our discussion. He stated that he never walks the streets without his weapon.

Traditional weapons seemed to appear on the streets quite frequently, even including in one case a spear.

We were told that the majority of men possesses fire arms. Beyond the statements which we received in Hargeisa and other places in the West, Garaad Chani claimed that these weapons "belong to the tribe for its defence". "Belonging" in this case may not be a matter of possession, but the Garaad and others emphasised the fact that the clans rely on these weapons for the defence of their respective community.

Buraleh and Garaad Chani both confirmed that the nomads in the rural areas usually possess weapons to look after their livestock and were even allowed to do so during Barre's time.

Most of the mechanisms of weapons diffusion to and among the society are quite similar to those in the West, however, with a different weight.

Systematic handing out of government weapons to the population also took place in this region during and after the Ogaden war, but it was to the majority clan rather than to a minority refugee population as in the West. The Dulbahante were part of Barre's clan alliance, therefore, government supplies must have played a greater role (Mohammed Buraleh Ismail and NGO Umbrella group, Las Anod).

Representatives of the local NGOs even mentioned that the weakening of the central government after 1977 was followed by a process in which the population armed itself. It was stated that these weapons would have been registered at that time.

Another major change must have occurred after the collapse of the government in 1991, when people looted the government stores (Garaad Chani). However, it is likely that this process did not release as many weapons to the population as in the West, since the army is said to have had its major weapon stores in the West.

Regarding the types of weapons, Garaad Chani mentioned SKS, FAL and SAR rifles, Sten submachine guns, and of course the range of AK versions.

4.2 Weapon-related Incidents

Garaad Chani told us that during the 8 years which he spent as a Garaad in Las Anod, not more than 16 or 17 people have been killed in the town. Even though the

number which he provided is not exact, it is likely to be a quite reliable assessment. The Garaads would be aware of every murder since they are the ones ordering the *diya* payment to compensate for the death of a person. The Garaad added that most of the murders have been committed with a fire arm.

Box 9: THE STORY OF A SHOOT-OUT

During a visit to the Hospital of Las Anod, we were introduced to three patients admitted with bullet injuries, two of whom had come across the border from Ethiopia and one from the city itself. All of these were cases of "revenge".

The two had been shot at after a member of their family had killed a member of another family. In the course of the revenge attack, which the latter family carried out with rifles at night, three people were killed and 13 injured. The two patients had then been brought to Las Anod by car in a 14 hours drive. Both of them were Somalis living in Ethiopia, and they have relatives in Las Anod to take care of them. They have been admitted to the hospital for 4 months. One of them, whose shin bone had been smashed by a bullet, is expected to remain in hospital for at least another 2 months.

Armed youths regularly block the road from Las Anod to Burco, particularly on the stretch between Las Anod and Ainabo. At an estimated 7 to 10 points along the road, young people stop passing vehicles and "tax" their drivers. The UN Security Regulations advise expatriates not to travel on the road (Garaad Chani, UNDP Security Officer [Hargeisa] and NGO Umbrella group [Las Anod]). Garaad Chani mentioned that roadblocks also sometimes take place on other roads in Sool.

In November 1997, five aid workers were kidnapped and later released by unidentified gunmen in Elayo (HAB 6/1997).

However, on the level of large-scale armed fighting, the situation in Sool has been calm since 1991, when the civil war ended (Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi).

4.3 The Police Force

According to Cabdul Kadir Moosa, the Somaliland Police maintains a force of 250 men in Sool, of which 150 are supposedly based in the city of Las Anod, while the remaining 100 are distributed around the 4 districts of Sool.

However, by and large, reality raises doubts about the existence of this police force. On various occasions, we found the police station of Las Anod deserted. This image has been confirmed by several people stating that "the policemen are living in their communities" (Saed Essa Abdulle) and that "the force does not have a good command and the community does not gain anything from it" (Garaad Abshir).

Just like the army and police in the West, the police in Las Anod receive a small payment from the government (Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi), but this appears to be more of a programme to maintain a minimum of government control over the militias than a salary for a particular job. The payment can be regarded as a kind of pension to prevent (some of) the ex-militias from living by their gun.

The security situation can probably be best described in the words of Garaad Abshir: "Everybody is his own policeman."

Nevertheless, we observed some 10-12 "policemen" on duty at each the airport of Las Anod and at the hospital. However, it was not possible to determine why these men - in contrast to their colleagues - were doing their jobs.

The only international NGO maintaining a compound in the city is Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). It should be mentioned that, at the time of our visit in March 1998, NPA had a total of 48 armed guards (with a monthly salary of around 200 US\$ per person) among their staff (plus 8 programme employees). The NGO only had very limited control over these guards. Some (but certainly not more than 20) of them lived on NPA's compound. According to Gary Jones, the resident representative of NPA, another group was taking care of the hospital which receives rehabilitation aid from NPA. Meanwhile, some 30 guards have been dismissed by NPA.

When we observed an armed guard at the hospital, we asked some people who he was. The hospital personnel said that this was a policeman. Whether he was an "official" policeman or an armed guard who was called a policeman could not be determined.

We also asked Saed Essa Abdulle about the armed men at the air strip. He claimed that these were regular policemen paid "the same 13 \$ of salary which I receive every month". However, he was not in a position to explain which incentives make these policemen work.

4.4 Military Forces

We learned of two military-politico groups in Sool, the United Somali Party (USP) Militia and Al-Itihad. Unfortunately, we were not able to gather information on the latter in Las Anod. Some remarks on this group are made in section 2.

USP Militia / "Security Forces"

The commanders of the USP Militia (which they prefer to call "Security Forces") received a mandate from the elders of the region to build a military force which integrates the Dulbahante ex-fighters. The commanders claimed that they would like to have up to 3000 men in the force, but up to now, they had only recruited 500. The number of 3000 may also be an indicator for the total number of militias in Sool.

According to Mohammed Buraleh Ismail and the commanders, the force does not receive support from the Hargeisa administration. Instead, Mohammed Mahmoud Omar, the Deputy Commander of the USP in Sool, even pointed out the "border line" between "Puntland" and "Somaliland" on a map to us: he stated that Guumays, a city on the road between Las Anod and Ainabo was marking the division of both territories.

The command of the USP has "headquarters", i.e. the two commanders, in Las Anod. The 500 men are encamped in 7 locations, one of which is just a few kilometres outside Las Anod (see Box 10). According to the deputy commander, some of the other sites are "at distances of 9, 80, and 100 km from the [Las Anod] camp". One camp "at the border to Somaliland" is said to have 120 men under arms. A group of about 50 men with around 30 pieces of artillery serve in a camp in Boohodle, which is the capital of a district in the neighbouring Togdheer region. However, these forces are allegedly under Las Anod's control. The area is inhabited by Dolbahunte (Garaad Chani).

Supposedly, there are some heavy weapons including PM "Stalinorgel", 6 tanks and 17 105 mm artillery pieces in the hills around Las Anod. But according to the command, which would like to integrate these systems, and a local craftsman, most of the weapons lack spare parts and cannot be made operational easily.

Regarding the weapon supplies of the force in general, actually very little information is available.

Since the Barre regime is said to have supported its allies in Somaliland with weapons, it is likely that some of these are now with the fighters who have (re-)joined the USP militia. They may have acquired weapons by looting government stores as well.

Box 10: *THE LAS ANOD USP CAMP*

During our stay in Las Anod, we were given a chance to visit the militia camp which is just outside the city. We followed the road to Kalabaydh up to a checkpoint where we had to leave the car. Just a few hundred meters from the road on the right hand side, a group of 37 armed men in uniforms gathered under a tree. The uniforms were in good shape, but without shoulder flashes. Each of the men was holding a rifle in his hands. They were standing to attention and giving a salute to the deputy commander of the force and the camp commander who were accompanying us. The two leaders were answering our questions while the militiamen remained quiet.

According to the two, this force had been in place for 7 months, i.e. since August 1997. It is said to receive training every morning. The men are living under open skies with their livestock. The commanders claimed that the militias live on their own resources and donations from the public.

The force is responsible for the protection of Las Anod. Furthermore, it was described to have a sort of police function. However, it has not yet been active, neither in a military nor in a police role.

Among the weapons of the fighters present, the AK versions were again predominant. But there were also G-3s and a considerable number of SKS carbines in the hands of the militias. The commander allegedly possesses a registration list of all the weapons, which according to him belong to the force. However, he stated that the command does not maintain control over the weapons. The rifles remain in the hands of the soldiers at any time, since "[the force] does not have buildings or stores." It was expressed that a certain amount of ammunition was acquired and handed out to the fighters in the early days of recruitment. This may have been hinting at a particular ammunition deal or supply by an external party.

MILITIAS IN THE USP CAMP NEAR LAS ANOD, MARCH 1998



An article of the HAB (1/1998) states that the ruling EPRDF of Ethiopia has delivered arms to some of Somaliland's Dolbahunte sub-clans on the pretext of combating Islamic fundamentalists in the area. It is likely that the term fundamentalists refers to the Al-Itihad group mentioned above and that the USP was the recipient of this aid.

Beyond this article, we could not get information on sources of weapons which the USP as a force has had in the past. Again, it seems to be very likely that the fighters brought their weapons with them⁴⁵.

4.5 Arms Market, Trade, Production and Prices

Similar to the market situation in the West, Las Anod (internally) does not seem to have a particularly strong trade going on, not least because no specific incentives prevail for people to buy or sell (fire) arms at the moment.

The main source of weapons which enter the city was mentioned to be Mogadishu (Mohammed Buraleh Ismail). Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi described weapons to flow "to where the prices are high". In his view, they currently flow from Mogadishu to Las Anod and then on to Bossaso.

A well-informed insider of the arms business in Las Anod added that most of the weapons which are currently in the hands of the population and on the market constitute the legacy of the former Somali government army. He told us about two recent examples of interregional arms trade. Around the middle of March, a huge amount of pistols and ammunition reached Las Anod. The informant added that land mines, supposedly "from Hargeisa", had been brought to the region as well. According to him, anti-vehicle, anti-tank and anti-personnel land mines, including

⁴⁵ It should therefore be questioned whether the arms belong to the force today.

Czech POMZ (AP) mines, are now available in the area. Much of the demand for mines is from gem stone prospectors today.

The evidence for the flow of weapons from Mogadishu to Las Anod is somewhat in contradiction to the information which we received in the course of another trip to Central Somalia. Nevertheless, it may be true regarding the demand for pistols, which is allegedly higher than the demand for larger weapons. This may indicate that the people started to anticipate large weapons, which can only be carried overtly, as inappropriate. On the other hand, larger weapons may continue to flow to Mogadishu, where this change in thinking has not taken place and where the military advantages of automatic rifles are key to their attractiveness.

The number of weapons involved in an interregional transfer was put at 15-20. It is quite likely that the number of weapons in transports within the Eastern part of Somaliland is higher due to the absence of controls.

The source also said that weapons are taken apart before transport in order to be safer in the case of a hold-up on the vehicle.

Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi confirmed that most of the ammunition trade is independent from the weapons trade. He added that the main resources which enable people to buy weapons are the sale of livestock and huge amounts of dollars which are sent in from relatives abroad to people living in Sool.

TABLE 5: ESTIMATES OF PRICES OF LIGHT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION IN LAS ANOD⁴⁶

Person interviewed	Weapon / Ammunition	Price in US\$
Mohammed Buraleh Ismail	AK 47	100
Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi	AK 47	215-285
	G-3	171
Anonymous Source	AK 47	243
	FAL	243
	G-3	257
	MMG	570
	FAL (NATO) Ammunition	0.64
	AK 47 Ammunition	0.50
	Grenades for G-3	2.43

Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi told us that prices of rifles decrease when the respective ammunition is not readily available.

It should be noted that the home production of weapons and ammunition may play an important role. Ammunition can be handmade when old cases of cartridges are available. And weapons can be assembled from parts of old weapons.

One of the interviewed persons for example only had handmade cartridges in his pistol magazine. And the RPD machine gun under his bed contained components of at least two rifles and a few handmade spare parts.

⁴⁶ Please take into account the remarks we made regarding price estimates in chapter 3.5. The uneven sums provided here are due to the fact that estimates were made in Somali Shillings.

4.6 Weapons Control

Without administrative structures and a functioning police force in place in Sool, obviously no weapons control laws can be implemented.

The situation regarding the traditional control of weapons is quite similar to the situation in the West, though the elders (Garaads) are much more important than in the West. However, they admitted that they do not have the authority to ban weapons from the streets or collect arms from the people.

According to Mohammed Buraleh Ismail, no social controls over weapons are currently in place. People can "feel free to carry weapons on the streets".

An overall observation from our discussions in Las Anod was that many people stressed the need for a government as a prerequisite for weapons control and disarmament.

5. THE ROLE OF SMALL ARMS IN SOMALILAND

Small arms as such no longer determine the social dynamics of Somaliland. However, their widespread diffusion bears a potential for future armed conflicts, particularly since there are no well-established and practised structures of conflict resolution in the country. Somaliland is far from having a recognised system of egalitarian social participation.

Weapons mean power. They enhance the ability to force one's will upon others. But all in all, arms have a "passive role" in Somaliland today - they constitute a reserve which is not drawn on at the moment.

Weapons are nevertheless part of daily life. They have become a commodity within an environment which is characterised by insecurity. Arms are therefore perceived as ordinary objects, not as special, extraordinary, or dangerous instruments.

From today's perspective, it is hard to imagine the citizens of Somaliland without these modern arms in future. This is particularly so, because the Somalis have a long tradition of possessing personal arms (also see below). The technical sophistication of the weapons today, especially when they are in the hands of possible enemies, makes it (psychologically) difficult for individuals in Somaliland to go back to relying on the older types of personal weapons.

Therefore, the social (or institutional/authoritarian) *control* of fire arms, combined with sufficient public security guarantees, should be regarded as a first priority.

Why do people have weapons?

The following individual motivations for having fire arms can be identified.

1. The most obvious motivation is self-protection. For many people (with the exception of the pastoralists), the desire for self-defence has become habitual. This desire is reinforced by the lack of public security in some places. The experience of on and off fighting in Somali history may also have contributed to the individual desire for self-protection.
2. Security has always been a private, not a public good in the Somali society. It will also in the foreseeable future be the responsibility of the individual (or his/her solidarity group, e.g. the sub-clan) to take care of his/her security. The individual need and motivation to have a weapon derives from this context. Only time will tell whether structures of public security (e.g. the police in Hargeisa) will be sustainable enough for people to leave their desire for self-protection behind.
3. It is of value in the Somali (nomadic) tradition to possess a weapon. We were frequently told that "Somalis never walk the streets without their weapon", even if it is only a stick or a knife. Though this statement tends to be an exaggeration, weapons are a part of social life in Somaliland. Furthermore, for many people, the possession of a weapon is a cultural attribute (or "status symbol") of the male gender role. It is also a sign of prestige.
4. Another reason for people to keep a weapon is the simple fact that it is a valuable asset.

5. Weapons provide income opportunities. A weapon is the precondition for working as a guard (at least in some parts of the country) or to join the security forces. Moreover, it allows access to illegal incomes from roadblocks or other crimes.

Weapons are mainly used:

- as "tools" to "settle" conflicts;
- to implement (or resist) claims of dominance of social groups;
- by individuals to force their will upon others;
- for the indispensable protection in the living and working condition of pastoralists;
- to produce an individual, subjective feeling of security.

The following reasons for the usage of weapons could be identified:

- lack of economic opportunities;
- lack of participation within the community or administrative structures;
- lack of rules for conflict management.

Impact of Small Arms on Society

The fragile relationship between the various sections of society, and the lack of recognised procedures for participation in and settlement of public matters, bear some responsibility for the violent conduct of conflict. However, the diffusion of automatic weapons changes (and often speeds up) the dynamics of violent escalation of conflicts.

The presence (and use) of weapons can change the values of a society. On the levels of both society and the individual, long-held cultural patterns may alter. For example, women have a role as conflict mediators and communicators in conflicts between families or clans. This position is undermined when "male patterns of conflict resolution", including the use of fire arms, win more weight.

For their own protection and the safety of their herds, pastoralists have always been armed. This has contributed to the importance of weapons in the Somali society. However, automatic weapons have never been needed for this purpose. These highly effective weapons have step by step substituted traditional weapons. A reverse process is difficult to imagine.

Conclusion

The way in which people will be able to participate in decision making processes, the degree to which they feel represented in political structures and their willingness to submit to the rule of laws (traditional or governmental) will determine the future settlements of conflicts. People will have to be able to economically and politically participate in social life in a peaceful way. But it is not the weakness or lack of "state" that constitutes the main problem of the Somaliland society. It is rather a deficit of commonly recognised authorities of order with an ability to assert themselves. Sanctions on the individual use of weapons are of enormous importance. Priority has to be given to the *functioning* of structures here, rather than a preference for either traditional *or* administrative structures.

The current problems of weak structures of representation, decision making, conflict resolution and justice will determine the meaning and role of weapons in the Somaliland society. Solutions to these problems could tackle the **demand for small**

arms in the long run. A demand-oriented approach to small arms problems would seek to satisfy the motivations and needs which constitute the demand for small arms by other means. That implies broadening the perspective from the weapons to the social and perhaps conflictual environment in which they exist.

In regard to the current situation and the near future, it first of all has to be acknowledged that as long as there is a demand for small arms, such weapons will be present. Collecting fire arms from the population by whatever means would prove useless as long as the perceived need for weapons, and individual and collective self-protection, prevails. The wide diffusion of such weapons in the Horn of Africa region and the absence of controls over arms flows virtually guarantees supplies to anyone who has a demand for small arms. Therefore, it appears necessary to identify and improve **controls over small arms** "where they are". This would also inevitably improve public security and further reduce the demand for small arms.

Furthermore, the control of weapons is a step which the people in Somaliland could realistically achieve with their own resources. It does not require the huge amounts of external funding which have already been spent on demobilisation programmes in Somaliland.

Recommendations

The longterm **reduction of the demand** for small arms should primarily be seen as a task which the people of Somaliland are addressing on their own and where outside intervention - if it takes place at all - should be carefully in accordance with the expressed will of the people. The issues of justice, representation, conflict resolution etc. are closely linked to the institutions of society and thus donors or NGOs, with their finance, are in a danger of forcing western social and political models on Somaliland.

However, the country has already gone a long way in building and restoring institutions, such as the councils of elders and the civil administration. If carefully examined in respect to the concerns mentioned before, these efforts could be supported by outside agencies.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, such interventions should not become the driving force in the process. A genuine process of institution building and strengthening has to be "owned" by the people of Somaliland if it is to reduce the demand for small arms. Therefore, preference should be given to *community-based* administrative and conflict settlement structures.

In respect to the economic motivations to possess or use fire arms, foreign agencies can help a lot to generally improve job opportunities in the country, e.g. with micro-credit programmes to stimulate domestic investment. Such activities should either be accessible by all or at least by all armed people. Programmes specifically tailored for "militias" would be in danger of adding to the economic value of small arms possession rather than reducing it (also see Box 11).

⁴⁷ In fact, such efforts have already occurred. The Life and Peace Institute (Sweden) has supported the rehabilitation and training of various councils and UNDP has provided help to the Somaliland Police Force.

Box 11: REINTEGRATION RATHER THAN DEMOBILISATION

Aside from the general insight that "demobilisation and reintegration have to go hand in hand", there is a need for a healthy separation of the terms and their definition. Moreover, their relationship to disarmament has to be clearly defined in this context.

Somaliland is faced with a situation where *mobilised* soldiers in fact are an exception rather than the rule. Some tend to define mobilisation by membership of the army (and police) rather than by the social reality of the soldiers. However, we believe that soldiers who already live in their community and do not have a relationship with the army beyond their monthly hush-money cannot really be regarded as "mobilised".

In such a context, priority should be given to *reintegration* measures on the *community level*.⁴⁸ Due to the de facto absence of differences in status between soldiers living in their communities, "self-demobilised" unemployed and jobless armed civilians, the obvious conclusion should be drawn that reintegration has to be offered to all these groups equally. Whoever in the community would be willing to turn in his weapon should receive targeted vocational training and practical help in starting up income-generating activities.

But in this case, turning in weapons should be regarded as a part of the trainee's "contribution" to the effort rather than as a disarmament step.

Furthermore, there is not only a need to resolve the economic factors that turn the combination of men and weapons into a problem. Reintegration programmes also have to tackle the lack of social skills of ex-fighters, e.g. by facilitating reconciliation efforts and strengthening traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. This could be achieved by, among other things, involving community elders in a partnership for such projects.

Small arms control, defined as measures to regulate the possession, carrying, usage and trade of such weapons, can be supported by all individuals and institutions in the field.

First of all, the institutional support proposed above should also aim to improve the internal conduct of e.g. the police or the army, perhaps even the militias, in respect to small arms. Transparency, clear and well-established rules for the handling of weapons, and strict controls over weapons and ammunition stocks of such forces are needed to tackle the misuse and flow of small arms on the one hand, and to give these forces the profile to "lead by good example" on the other hand. This would be a precondition for such institutions to credibly implement weapon laws.

While the current small arms laws as such are quite sufficient, they lack implementation, administrative capacity (e.g. for the registration of weapons), practical guidelines, and appropriate training for police and other relevant staff. Foreign expertise could help to develop a government policy for the stricter implementation of small arms-related laws.

⁴⁸ Even more so, since projects which were designed for the "national" level failed in places outside government control, such as Sool region.

As a first step, it could be part of the strategy to legalize weapons trade and possession in order to control it, similar to liberal drug control policies. Amnesties for the possession of "illegal weapons" (almost all of the small arms in Somaliland are "illegal") could be granted to those who voluntarily register their weapons. It should be considered to make the local arms trade a legally registered business, in order to make it transparent and to separate it from the interregional trade which involves the bigger supply shipments of arms and ammunition.⁴⁹ Local arms dealers could then be forced to report their activities and to make sure that any weapon sold was registered. These are some of the preconditions for effectively restraining the proliferation of small arms.

Such a process could also be used to mobilise public awareness and to kick off a countrywide discussion on steps to strengthen controls over small arms. It should be part of such a strategy to further gather and spread information on the harm that small arms continue to cause, particularly the dangers resulting from the inappropriate storage of weapons in households.

The community itself can contribute to arms control. It has been reported that clan elders sometimes ask men of their constituency to purchase weapons for the defense of their clan. Therefore, and because of their key position in preserving security in general, clan elders should also participate in the control of weapons. The elders could also be in a very good position to promote weapons control in the population and to mobilise public support. Sanctions can be set up against people who threaten or injure others with fire arms. A strict implementation of *diya* payments on these abuses could be a way to achieve this. For example, the clan elders could aim to reach a consensus that whoever shoots more than a certain number of bullets from his pistol or rifle without a legitimate reason will be punished. It has been reported to us that a chief in Southern Sudan has forced such people to give up their weapon.⁵⁰

There is a need for individuals to show civil courage. People can refuse to support relatives who use weapons. Every individual can give expression to his/her belief that weapons have to be banned from the streets.⁵¹

Besides the support roles which have been laid out before, foreign agencies should include small arms-related components in their project work. These organisations have plenty of opportunities to raise awareness of small arms in the context of their developmental or humanitarian work. Hospitals could set up signs at their main entries, showing the number of bullet wounds treated. School teachers could be mobilised to speak out on the dangers of small arms. Birth-attendants and medical personnel could be asked to spread information on small arms etc.

Moreover, foreign agencies can build up pressure on local elites, police, religious and traditional authorities to act on small arms control. For example, Oxfam (UK)

⁴⁹ This proposal also reflects our understanding that most of the *local arms trade* is more or less a circulation of weapons within one location or region. Without outside supplies, a legalisation of the local arms trade would not lead to a further proliferation of small arms. As for ammunition, other measures would have to be taken.

⁵⁰ Such measures are of course dependent on the degree of authority that the elders possess in a particular community. Nevertheless, elders should be motivated to take such initiatives.

⁵¹ The walls of the living room of a Chief in Las Anod were expressing the "ethics" of the Midgaan, a minority group in Somalia. This included a ban on the use and production of weapons. In Hargeisa, a sign in front of a hotel showed that weapons are not wanted in this place. Another way of demonstrating one's attitude are pictures or stickers on cars or buses, etc.

does not work in communities in Somaliland where people carry weapons on the streets. The organisation explicitly expresses this condition to the community. The same approach should be chosen by international agencies working in refugee camps.

NGOs could offer training for alternative forms of conflict intervention (e.g. non-violent resistance / civil disobedience or "social defence") to particular groups. These methods would have to be adapted to the cultural context of Somaliland, nevertheless they bear a potential which should be explored. For example, women's groups have often had a strong role in stopping violence and settling conflicts in a non-violent fashion.

The often decentralised structure of NGOs, with outposts in remote areas, could also serve as an infrastructure for small arms monitoring.

Generally speaking, foreign agencies should reconsider their own policy of "employing arms". Armed guards for the protection of NGOs or UN agencies would be in contradiction to project activities for the control of small arms.

In the event that the demand for small arms declines (e.g. because of the government's efforts to provide public security), an increased number of weapons could become available on the market. The market should therefore be closely monitored. In such a situation, the collection of weapons should be combined with the provision of funds for public security and social and economic development in an area. Instead of "buying-back" weapons, or demobilising self-demobilees, the following public announcement could be made: If a specific number of weapons is voluntarily turned in over a specific (short) period of time, e.g. four-wheel-drives will be provided to the police. If the number of weapons is even higher, a school is going to be reconstructed, etc.⁵²

The weapons collected in such a programme should be destroyed in a public ceremony.

⁵² This approach has been chosen by UNDP in Albania (see Van der Graaf 1998)

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ANNEX I: INTERVIEW PARTNERS AND INFORMAL CONTACTS

Nairobi

Matt Bryden, War-torn Societies
Project, Somali Programme

Thania Paffenholz, EU Somalia Unit
Giorgio Sartori, UNDOS, Information
Systems and GIS

Szasza Zelleke, UNDOS,
Documentation Center

06.03.1998

Jack Klassen, Somali Civil Protection
and Rehabilitation Project, UNDP

09.03.1998

David Stephen, Representative of the
United Nations Secretary General
for Somalia, UNPOS

Dr. Babafemi A. Badejo, Senior
Political Advisor, UNPOS

Hargeisa

16.03.1998

Abdi Abdullahi Riirash, General
Manager, NDC

Mohammed Abdi Allgen, Programme
Officer, NDC

David M. Geelle, NDC

17.03.1998

Tom Guggenheim, Somali Civil
Protection and Rehabilitation
Project, UNDP

Abiib Ahmed, Physiotherapist
Assistant, Action Nord Sud/
Handicap International

18.03.1998

Ismael Issa Abrar, Trainer, Life and
Peace Institute

Mohammed Robleh Hosh, Trainer, Life
and Peace Institute

Abdirahman Yusuf Artan, Trainer, Life
and Peace Institute

Jama Mohammoud Omar, National
Programme Officer, Life and Peace
Institute

19.03.1998

Saed Essa Abdulle, Chief of Planning
and Research, Somaliland Police

Helga Griffin, Danish Refugee Council

Ismael Al-Azhari, Water,
Environmental and Sanitation
Officer, UNICEF

21.03.1998

Cabdul Kadir Moosa, Deputy
Commissioner of the Somaliland
Police

Mohammed Elmi Geele, Chief of
General Relationships, Somaliland
Police

Abdi Jama, Somaliland Programme
Officer, Oxfam

22.03.1998

Ismael Mohammed Osman,
Commandant of the National Army
of the Republic of Somaliland

23.03.1998

Lenard Ngoni, Delegate Finance and
Administration, Swiss Group

Abdi Hashi, Businessman, (Ex-
member of) Somali Peaceline

Las Anod

24.03.1998

Garaad Abdul Chani (Taraai) Jaamac
Prof. Deeqa J. Olijooog, ex-Minister

Garaad Abshir

25.03.1998

Abdullahi Mohammed Abdi,
Commander of Security Forces,
Sool

Mohammed Mahmoud Omar, Deputy
Commander of Security Forces,
Sool

Mohammed Buraleh Ismail, Ex-
Minister and Ex-Deputy Speaker of
the Parliament of Somalia

Yassin Ali, Local Manager, Norwegian
People's Aid

Mohamed Musa Said, Programme Co-
ordinator, Norwegian People's Aid

26.03.1998

NGO Umbrella Group

Dr. Saed, Director, Las Anod Hospital

Dr. Abdi Awad Ibrahim, Public Health
Officer, Las Anod Hospital

Ahmed Farah Mohammed

Gary P. Jones, Resident
Representative, Norwegian
People's Aid, Somalia Programme

27.03.1998

"Security Forces" Camp

Women NGO Representatives

Sheikh

28.03.1998

Aden Nur Abdi

Berbera

30.03.-02.04.1998

Berbera Hospital

Women Training of the Life and Peace
Institute

Zeinab Hassan Mohammed, Trainer,
Life and Peace Institute

Amina Ali Idriss, Trainer, Life and
Peace Institute

Burco

03./04.04.1998

Ali Jama Hersi, Public Relations
Officer and Deputy Police
Commander, Burco Police

Aden Saed Ahmed, Logistics Officer
and Deputy Police Commander,
Burco Police

Nairobi

18.04.1998

Emmanuel Deisser

22.04.1998

Hilal Aden, Life and Peace Institute

Erigavo:

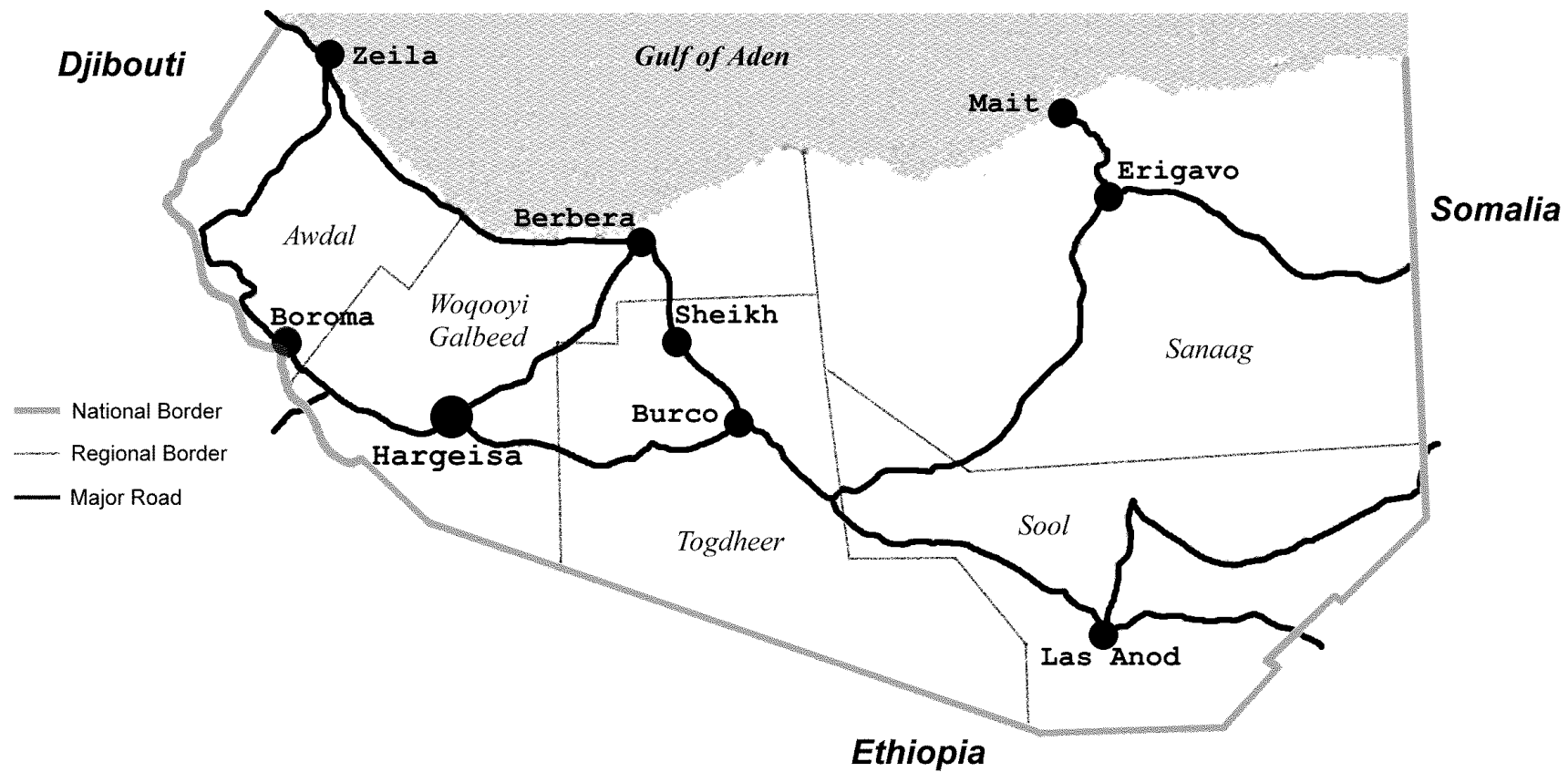
06.09.1998

Yusuf Ainab Muse, Minister of Defence
Hussein Farah "Dodi", Deputy Minister
of Finance

Abdillahi Dualleh, Minister for Civil
Aviation and Air Transport

Ahmed Mohamood Mohamed,
Regional Governor of Sanaag

ANNEX II: MAP OF SOMALILAND



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