

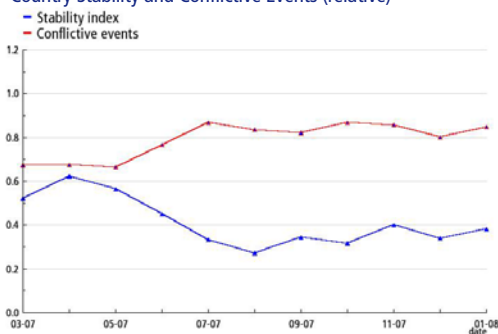
SOMALIA | Trends in Conflict and Cooperation

FAST predicted at the beginning of the year that the installation of the unpopular and weak internationally recognized Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) would mark another unsuccessful attempt to stabilize Somalia because the TFG is neither willing to share power with its opponents nor has the military and resource capacity to survive on its own. The TFG will not bring a new unifying political formula. The support of external actors simply determines the speed and direction of Somalia's devolution and fragmentation. The latest FAST update (October) indicates that the failure of national reconciliation, which was initially aimed at devising a political formula for Somalia, left the country with no other major inclusive political reconciliation initiatives in the offing at a national level. At the end of the last reporting period a new unexpected political event was reported; a rift opened up within the TFG leadership for the first time since its installation. The current update assesses the overall situation in Somalia since then.

SECURITY

During the reporting period, the overall security situation in Somalia deteriorated as the militant elements of the Courts movement and disaffected clans continued their insurgency against the TFG and Ethiopian forces and the conflict between Somaliland and Puntland escalated (see graph).

Country Stability and Conflictive Events (relative)



Source: FAST event data

Local and FAST daily monitoring reports indicate that despite the TFG and Ethiopian forces' attempts to crush insurgency, it continues unabated and have spread to most of the regions of Somalia south of the sub-states of Puntland. Local sources claim that escalating clashes between Ethiopian-TFG forces and anti-government elements resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians in parts of south and central Somalia including the Gubta and Daynile areas of Mogadishu, the Walanweyne district of Lower Shebelle, the Dinsor district (Bay region) and the Mataban district (Hiran region). Security incidents targeting humanitarian organizations were also reported in Daryeel Bulsho Guud and Puntland.

The TFG and Ethiopian military forces' struggle to crackdown on insurgency has become more problematic during the reporting period. The failing trend of the TFG-Ethiopian military forces to control insurgency and the country's security can be best underscored by the statements from TFG officials and its opponents. On 13

December, the director of security at the National Security Ministry, Sheikh Qasim Ibrahim Nur, announced that 80% of the country is outside the control of the TFG. Meanwhile, opposition groups were reportedly beginning to organize around a more militant line emphasizing armed resistance.

The most unexpected development during the reporting period in the area of security was the eruption of new violence in the territorial conflict over Sool and eastern Sanaag between Somaliland and Puntland. The conflict displaced several thousand civilians and increased tensions and instability in the relatively stable North of former Somalia. The conflict erupted on 17 September as forces loyal to Puntland's government clashed with local pro-Somaliland militias near the Sool region's capital Las Anod. Throughout the second half of September and the first half of October, the conflict continued with both sides claiming to have control of Las Anod. On 15 October, Somaliland forces took control of Las Anod, pushing Puntland forces 40 km eastward towards its capital, Garowe.

Puntland repeatedly announced its plans to counter-attack Somaliland in order to reverse the situation. Intra-clan tensions spread between members of the Isaaq clan (supporters of Somaliland) and some segments of the Harti (Darod clan), who not only provide for the majority of the Sool population but also inhabit Puntland. During December, Puntland appealed for international help to fight back Somaliland. Mobilization efforts, especially supported by the diaspora, continued. But with most of Puntland's forces and finances tied in the South of Somalia, a decisive change of events is currently not expected.

SOCIAL

During the reporting period, Somalia continued to suffer from endured cycles of severe drought, catastrophic flooding and political instability, and is now facing an acute humanitarian emergency caused by continued armed conflict. The United Nations estimates that approximately 2 million children and adults living in Somalia are seriously affected by the deteriorating humanitarian situation. A recent United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) study found that child malnutrition has reached critical levels due to violence and the restricted access for aid workers. It is reported that 83,000 children in the central and southern parts of Somalia are suffering from malnutrition and 13,500 of those are severely malnourished and at the risk of dying.

According to UNHCR, over 294,000 people have fled the capital Mogadishu during the reporting period. Clashes between Ethiopian and TFG forces on one side and anti-government elements on the other – both in Mogadishu and in other regions of the country – are contributing to an increase in population displacement. According to aid agencies, the humanitarian community continues to provide assistance to recently displaced populations; but the rising number of incidents targeting humanitarian organizations, such as the kidnappings of staff, invasions and looting of non-governmental organization (NGO) facilities and warehouses, reportedly impeded their coordination and delivery. During December, the Security Council called on all sides in Somalia to use peaceful means to consolidate peace in the country and to enter into substantial dialog aimed at achieving a full and all-inclusive national reconciliation.

POLITICAL

Events during the reporting period confirmed that Somalia's political situation has gradually reached complete power devolution since there is no political actor or functional government on the offering that would initiate any form of stabilization in the country. The complete devolution tendency of Somalia's politics explains nothing more than the gradual collapse of the TFG administration itself.

The disintegration of the TFG began with a power struggle between TFG's President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and its Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi over exploration contracts for Somali's unproved oil reserve. That power struggle created an unexpected constitutional crisis that nearly tore the TFG apart during October. Between 3 and 22 October, rifts reportedly continued between Gedi and Yusuf's fractions and escalated to the limit when Gedi's fraction declared itself to be a political party and issued a pledge to protect the constitution and government. However, during the forth week of October, the risk of disintegration was managed by external actors through mediating Gedi's resignation. Gedi "voluntarily" resigned as prime minister on 29 October and the TFG parliament approved Nur "Adde" Hussein, nominated by Yusuf, as its new prime minister on 23 November.

The new combination of Hussein and Yussuf leading the top of the TFG is at first reminiscent of the early days of Gedi's term as prime minister - who at the time was often portrayed as a weak technocrat, just like Hussein now. Boosted by Ethiopia, Gedi quickly displayed a mix of arrogance and narrow-mindedness. Hussein is meanwhile described as a soft-spoken moderator with a far more consultative attitude. While it remains to be seen how he and his relationship to Yusuf will develop over time, he seems to have won a lot of goodwill in the wider international community.

Hussein managed to form a donor power government during January when Somalia's interim parliament on 9 January gave a vote of confidence to the new cabinet, which will consist of 18 ministers and five deputy ministers, compared with the 73 ministers and their deputies in the previous structure. As power devolution already persisted and deepened following the current rifts and conflict between Somaliland and Puntland, the current success will be temporal and short. The cabinet put together by Hussein breaks with the past in terms of size. Remarkably, none of the four Darod ministers come from Yussuf's Majerteen subclan. Observers see this as an important sign of an ongoing realignment in the clan power balance within the TFG leadership, reducing Majerteen weight and broadening the southern base among the Hawiye and Rahanwayn clan. Some view this as a preparatory step in case the president, who has suffered from recurrent health issues, may no longer be fit for office.

INTERNATIONAL

Events during the reporting period confirmed that none of the external actors interested in Somalia's stabilization seemed to be willing and able to resist the tendencies of statelessness in Somalia. Although external actors realized the new reality in Somalia, they remained on the sidelines – reluctant to play a vital role in transforming the existing power configuration problems in Somalia – and continued to back the collapsing TFG half-heartedly. They are unwilling to commit substantial resources and deploy troops for peacekeeping missions to an unpromising and collapsing TFG, which only substantiates that the TFG is still lacking basic support for its existence.

The major actors in Somalia's conflict are confronted with the contradictory decision on Ethiopian military presence and the effects of its occupation, on which they have staked themselves. External and domestic actors support the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces since its crackdown measures have resulted in human rights abuses. During the reporting period, UN humanitarian agencies have charged the Ethiopian government with serious human rights abuses in its crackdown on insurgency. They also affirm that the TFG could not survive in the absence of Ethiopian forces unless the planned African peacekeeping mission would be in place. At present there are only 1,600 Ugandan and 100 Burundian troops out of a projected force of 8,000. During December, Ethiopia

condemned the UN for its charge of human rights violations and complained about the reluctance of regional governments to deploy peacekeeping forces.

The donor power also continued perfunctorily to support the TFG, unwilling to commit substantial resources to an unpromising and collapsing TFG, making the survival of the TFG leadership questionable. On 19 December, the UN envoy to Somalia claimed that the international efforts in Somalia have been half-hearted and dissipating. On 21 December, the African Union Peace and Security Council issued a statement, which indicated the failure of the international community to support Somalia's stabilization.

OUTLOOK

Security will continue to deteriorate and spread in many regions of Somalia. The insurgency against Ethiopian–TFG forces will be continued despite attempts by the forces to mount a brutal crackdown. Tensions will remain high between Somaliland and Puntland over their conflicting territorial claims. It is also possible that Puntland will be able to mount a counter-offensive against Somaliland.

As security deteriorates, civilian casualties will increase and the delivery of humanitarian supplies will be halted. Power conflict, inter-clan conflicts over water and pasture will persist, piracy and crime will increase displacement. There will likely be a humanitarian crisis as the insurgency and counter measures of Ethiopian and TFG forces create hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, and humanitarian access is still hampered by insecurity and other factors.

The TFG will continue to be weak and unpopular due to the lack of support and disintegration. The political opposition to the TFG will remain intransigent in its demand that Ethiopian forces withdraw from Somalia before it will negotiate on power-sharing. The patterns of power devolution and fragmentation will be deepened.

The donor powers will continue with their small contributions and to pressure the TFG for broad-based power-sharing and African states for more contributions to the weak African Union peace-keeping force. Ethiopia will continue its military presence at a lower profile resulting from some donor power pressure (e.g. the UN) to withdrawal its forces from Somalia.