# CSG PAPERS

## Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia

Ken Menkhaus

No. 5 / April 2016

## About the CSG Papers

This peer-reviewed paper series provides a venue for comprehensive research articles and reports on a variety of security sector reform and related topics. It endeavors to present innovative research that is both academically rigorous and policy relevant.

Authored by prominent academics, analysts and practitioners, the CSG Papers cover a range of topics, from geographic case studies to conceptual and thematic analysis, and are based on extensive research and field experience. Most CSG Papers are products of research projects undertaken by the Centre for Security Governance and its partners.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABOUT THE NON-STATE SECURITY PROVIDERS PROJECT

This is the third of four papers produced as part of the CSG's project on Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Conflict-Affected States. The project was made possible by generous financial support from the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

The project considers new aspects of the relationship between security and development by examining how the presence of non-state security providers affects political development in conflict-affected societies. The established "security-development nexus" maintains that security and development are mutually reinforcing, and conversely that insecurity and underdevelopment are mutually reinforcing. While these links are of obvious importance, more recent work suggests two other relationships of equal significance: between insecurity and development insofar as violent conflict may fuel political formation; and between underdevelopment and security insofar as supposedly "underdeveloped" and conflict-affected areas may feature unique and unconventional security structures. The project has explored these largely uncharted relationships by examining processes of political formation in societies that host a diverse array of non-state security providers and assessing the effects of the latter on processes of state formation, deliberate state-building interventions and the emergence of unconventional governance structures. Drawing on three case studies—Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan—the project's main research questions are: how does the presence of diverse non-state security providers affect the process of state formation and state building, and how should this shape donor state building approaches?  The overarching goal of the project is to stimulate a discourse and make initial policy recommendations on how donors can better engage non-state security structures in the context of state building and security sector reform programs.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. Ken Menkhaus** is Professor and Chair of Political Science at Davidson College, where he has taught since 1991. He received his Ph.D. in International Studies in 1989 from the University of South Carolina, where he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for dissertation research on southern Somalia.  His subsequent specialization has focused on development, conflict analysis, humanitarian response, peace operations, state failure, state building, diasporas, and political Islam, involving both academic research and policy work. Most of his fieldwork has been conducted in the Horn of Africa and East Africa.  He has provided expert testimony on five occasions before US Congressional subcommittees, and served as Director of Studies for the Rift Valley Institute's annual Horn of Africa course from 2008 to 2014. Dr. Menkhaus is the author of over fifty articles, book chapters, and monographs, including *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (2004), "Governance without Government in Somalia" in *International Security* (2007), "If Mayors Ruled Somalia," (2014) and "Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland" (2015).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Somalia, political economy drivers and socio-cultural practices combine to reinforce the role of non-state security providers in the context of a fragile state. This is an impediment to quick assertion of a state monopoly on the legitimate use of force. External efforts to strengthen the formal state security sector and weaken non-state security providers in Somalia are, in consequence, swimming against powerful currents. This paper will show that non-state security providers will remain a central feature of the Somali political landscape into the foreseeable future, and the Somali state will be forced to negotiate messy and fluid partnerships with these actors. In these negotiated partnerships, the central government has a few advantages — control of foreign aid and some customs revenue, and externally recognized juridical sovereignty, which can be parleyed into other sources of influence. But the non-state security providers enjoy greater on-the-ground power across most of the country; higher levels of local legitimacy, loyalty and support; the capacity to tax local populations in areas they claim to control; an ability to penetrate the government and exploit its resources without answering to it; and the ability to withdraw their support from the government at will. External actors will not be in a position to fundamentally alter this reality, but can and should take steps to avoid incentivizing non-state security actors' interests in undermining state building.

## INTRODUCTION

In Somalia, a country that is slowly emerging from two decades of complete state collapse, armed non-state security providers are both ubiquitous and powerful. One recent study describes Somalia as a "neo-medieval mire" of localized authorities and armed groups (McFate, 2014: 133). Somali non-state armed groups are stronger than nascent state security forces, and they intersect freely with the national army and police, blurring the line between state and non-state actors. By hatting themselves as part of the formal security sector, armed non-state actors enjoy access to state resources even as they ignore civilian chains of command and continue to pursue the parochial agendas of their leaders. Their current relationship with the formal security sector is thus not so much integration as it is penetration.

Despite a well-earned reputation as predators on civilians, Somalia's galaxy of armed groups has endured and thrived since 1990 in part because the members provide at least some degree of protection and other services to their constituent groups. Efforts to arrest or marginalize some of the more noxious leaders of these armed groups have consistently produced vigorous protests and rallies by their constituencies, reflecting militia leaders' adept ability to manipulate clan identity to their advantage. The admixture of protection, extortion and predation that embodies the paradoxical relations between armed non-state actors and the communities in which they operate has parallels with mafias, militias and protection rackets in many other parts of the world.

The enduring strength of Somali armed non-state actors, combined with the chronic weakness of the formal Somali state, has resulted in a central government that can only claim nominal jurisdiction over territory if and when it has negotiated access with the local actors controlling that terrain. Contemporary Somalia is, in consequence, a classic example of a "mediated state," in which a weak central state must broker deals with armed non-state authorities within its borders (Menkhaus, 2006-2007; 2008). In the short term, this is an unavoidable if unpalatable reality for nascent fragile governments that lack the ability to impose their consolidation of power over territory they claim. In the long term, the intriguing question is whether and under what conditions armed non-state actors can become viable partners in state building and consolidation, or whether they are situational or total spoilers that must eventually be outmanoeuvred and marginalized.[1] Somalia presents itself as a living laboratory in which to try to answer this question.

This paper constitutes a case study of non-state security providers (NSSPs) in Somalia and their complex relationships with formal state authorities.[2] The case material considers evidence from across the country since 1990, but focuses especially on the current situation in the capital Mogadishu, where armed non-state actors are most numerous, active and in daily contact with the new Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). It frames the inquiry through two theoretical frameworks. The first is a political economy lens,

which highlights the interests driving the behaviour of non-state security providers. It focuses attention on the extent to which the commoditization of security in the context of state failure perpetuates the dominance of non-state security providers and reinforces their desire to keep their market intact by blocking the development of a more effective formal security sector. The second is a social-cultural lens, which focuses on the enduring resilience of long-standing social structures designed to provide group protection in a historic context of statelessness.

The conclusion reached by the investigation is that the combination of political economy drivers and deep-rooted socio-cultural practices of non-state security provision constitutes a "perfect storm" in Somalia, reinforcing the role of non-state security providers and working against a quick assertion of a state monopoly on the legitimate use of force inside the country's borders. External efforts to strengthen the formal state security sector and weaken non-state security providers in Somalia are, in consequence, swimming against powerful currents. NSSPs will remain a central feature of the Somali political landscape into the foreseeable future, and thus the Somali state — barring some dramatic change in its power and resources that would allow it to co-opt or crush NSSPs — will be forced to negotiate messy and fluid partnerships with these actors. In these negotiated partnerships, the central government has a few advantages — control of foreign aid and some customs revenue ("power of the purse"), and externally recognized juridical sovereignty, which can be parleyed into other sources of influence. But the non-state security providers enjoy greater on-the-ground power across most of the country; higher levels of local legitimacy, loyalty and support; the capacity to tax local populations in areas they claim to control; an ability to penetrate the government and exploit its resources without answering to it; and the ability to withdraw their support from the government at will. External actors will not be in a position to fundamentally alter this reality, but can and should take steps to avoid incentivizing non-state security actors' interests in undermining state building.

The study draws on a combination of secondary sources, the author's fieldwork in Mogadishu in the summer of 2014 and the author's previous research in the country spanning almost 30 years.[3]

## THE CONTEXT OF PEACE AND STATE BUILDING IN SOMALIA

### Historical legacy of stateless security arrangements

Until the colonial era, most Somali communities lived as pastoralists or agro-pastoralists in a context of statelessness. The key unit around which communities organized, self-identified and sought protection, access to key resources (land and water) and access to customary law was segmentary lineage or clan.

The details of Somali clannism are complex and need not be repeated here, except to highlight a few features of clan-based political organization that are salient to this investigation.[4] First, the strong sense of collective identity and mutual obligation in clans make them the principal source of individual and household protection in a stateless context. Clans quickly mobilize to defend their own members and, if customary law breaks down, exact revenge on rival clans that have committed a crime against one of their own. This can have a powerful deterrent effect on potential acts of political violence or crime. Members of more powerful lineages enjoy greater protection than do members of weak or low-status clans, which often endure violence and predation their clan can do little about. The story of Somalia's terrible loss of life in the famines of 1991-1992 and again in 2011 is very much a tale of how weak social groups were preyed upon, stripped of assets and denied access to food aid by more powerful groups.

Second, customary law (*xeer*) in Somalia is inextricably nested in clan identity. Customary law is brokered between clans, and applied by clan elders. Blood compensation (*diya*), the cornerstone of customary law, is based on the collective responsibilities of *diya*-paying groups, low levels of lineage affiliation comprising 600 to 6,000 of one's closest kin. This form of law, based on collective responsibility for crimes committed and compensational rather than punitive justice, is imperfect but remains an important source of legal and physical protection in Somali society. Even during the period of a strong central government in Somalia under the dictator Siyad Barre (1969–1990), customary law was the most common means of resolving most crimes and disputes, placing an important judicial role in the hands of non-state actors.[5]

Third, in the pastoral context, clan control of territory was and remains paramount for the survival of the group, and hence is jealously guarded. Any access to that rangeland by outsiders was a matter of negotiation with clan elders. Pastoral groups in distress, seeking to relocate to another clan's territory, could do so by being adopted into the lineage, a process known as *shegad*. This enshrined them as low-status but real members of the lineage, affording them at least some degree of protection and access to customary law and resources. Travellers, merchants and migrants moving through another clan's territory in the past had to negotiate safe passage through the use of an *abbaan* or contracted protector who ensures one's safety through the land of that individual's clan. This precolonial

practice has seen an impressive revival since the collapse of the state, providing protection for the transit of goods and people across the country, while serving as a form of rent-seeking activity for clans controlling highly trafficked corridors (Cassanelli,1982 Marchal, 1993 Nenova, 2004: 10). The same logic of the *abbaan* system is at work for newcomers settling in towns controlled by one clan; they must rely on a local patron to ensure their safety and protect their assets from theft. The key to the success of these arrangements is the power wielded by the *abbaan*. One study notes that "a patron is selected for his probity, status, and above all in a society where force is important, the strength of his lineage" (Nenova, 2004: 10). This practice is critical for understanding how Somali households outside their clan's stronghold can still enjoy protection, if they have the means and social capital to secure it.

Finally, lineage identity involves powerful obligations to assist fellow members in times of need or crisis. Clan and sub-clans thus constitute critical forms of social insurance that provide members with varying degrees of protection against severe deprivation.[6] As with physical protection, weak, poor and low-status lineages are less able to play this role for their members, whose vulnerabilities are much greater as a result.

These and other long-standing social mechanisms for securing one's protection in a stateless context were never entirely suppressed during the colonial and post-colonial periods of state rule. They quickly revived in full force with the collapse of the state, and in some cases morphed into something new. The role of the *abbaan*, for instance, evolved into highly lucrative protection services for international aid agencies and others operating in Somalia.

Somali society's impressive resilience in the face of the many stresses and shocks associated with protracted state collapse and civil war is due in part to the revival and adaptation of these pre-colonial socio-cultural institutions. Some of these practices have both negative and positive impacts, and hence have attracted critics and efforts to eliminate them. Clannism as a whole is widely viewed by Somalis as a divisive and parochial dynamic that works against state building and nation building, and clan militias are viewed as spoilers, to be solved through demobilization and re-integration. Attitudes toward customary law are more mixed — some Somalis see it as anachronistic, extra-legal, biased against women, dispensed by venal and sometimes illiterate elders, and, depending on political persuasion, either illiberal or un-Islamic.[7] Others argue customary law is the only trusted and legitimate form of dispute resolution and order in the country, and that without it Somalia would fall into true anarchy. What often goes unacknowledged is the relationship between clan militias and customary law. In the event *xeer* fails to resolve a dispute, a clan's ability to threaten or exact revenge is a powerful incentive for lineages to respect and utilize customary law. *Xeer* and the threat of armed violence are two sides of the same coin.

Regardless of whether these informal institutions have positive or negative impacts on state building and security, they have powerful historical and cultural roots and will not easily be replaced or suppressed in the near future.

### The political economy of private security since 1990

The Somali civil war, which began in 1988, led to the January 1991 toppling of the Barre regime and the beginning of a protracted period of complete state collapse. Clan-based militias, increasingly fragmented along sub-clan lines, fought for control of territory and the opportunity to loot, in what became a classic case of a war economy. Large-scale "clan cleansing" of the country occurred as families fled to the home territories of their clan for protection (Kapteijns, 2014). One million Somalis crossed international borders as refugees, forming a large global diaspora. Weaker social groups and minorities who were unable to arm themselves were the primary victims of the campaign of plundering that, by late 1991, produced a famine that claimed 250,000 lives. During that period, one's clan or ethnic identity was often literally a matter of life or death.

The armed groups that emerged during that critical period of 1991-1992 developed features that remain present to this day.[8] First, with few exceptions (namely Islamist armed groups, such as Al Ittihad in 1991-1996 and Al Shabaab since 2005), armed groups organized exclusively around clan identity. Second, those lineage-based armed groups were, and remain, notoriously fissurable along sub-clan lines, with fighting often more intense within them than in battles with rival groups. Third, the most cohesive units in these militias tended to be groups that were the size and disposition of armed gangs — small circles of youth who made collective decisions about when and whether to join the larger militia in battle. Command and control was virtually non-existent in this context, in part because armed fighters were rarely paid. The decision to fight was a matter of risk-reward calculations driven by expectation of opportunities to loot without getting killed (Marchal, 1993).

This reality — that looting and extortion quickly became the principal driver of militia behaviour across southern Somalia in 1991 — laid the groundwork for a war economy, in which armed conflict became a means of perpetuating conditions of lawlessness where individuals and groups profiteered. Whole clans benefited from occupation of valuable urban and riverine real estate; merchants and militia leaders made millions at the commanding heights of the plundering, selling scrap metal and diverting food aid; and lowly teenaged gunmen shook down desperately poor villagers for scraps. Levels of gratuitous violence, massacres and rape were shocking by any standard in the early phase of the civil war. Insecurity for almost all who lived in Somalia during this period was astronomically high, though worse for some than others. Traditional mechanisms

for managing and deterring violence were temporarily overwhelmed by the scale of the violence, a reality captured by T-shirts popular among young gunmen that read, in English, "I am the Boss."

In this very dangerous setting, those with the means to secure protection did so, even at high cost. In the process, security in Somalia moved from being a public to a privatized, commoditized good.

This transformation of security occurred at all levels of society whenever one's clan was inadequate for protection. Poor rural farmers from minority groups like the Somali Bantu accepted extortionate protection racket arrangements, in which armed militiamen provided them protection against other armed militias and gangs, in return for 50 percent of their harvest. "It's not good, but it's much better than in 1991 when they stole everything" confided one villager in 1993.[9]

In urban settings, neighbourhood watch groups and patrols were formed as part of an alliance between residents and the very gunmen who had preyed on them. These informal security arrangements had obvious benefits for residents, but were also preferred by the gunmen, who earned a living from a more respectable and less risky job as security patrols rather than as looters. These and other security regimes that emerged within a year or two of the start of the civil war constituted an intriguing gray area between extortion and taxation, between mafioso protection racket and nascent police force. The country has remained trapped in this gray area ever since.

In addition to the average (poor) Somali, a new class of Somali economic elite arose during this period — the Somali business class, which expanded dramatically in the aftermath of the civil war and UN peacekeeping operation of 1993-1994. Business interests holding multi-million dollar fixed assets — telecommunication companies and infrastructure, remittance companies handling hundreds of millions of dollars of money transfers, import-export companies with large warehouses and fleets of trucks, hoteliers, *qat* importers,[10] air transport companies, and other service and light manufacturing companies (like the Coca-Cola bottling plant), all required security to protect their assets from theft or destruction. They did this with surprising success, given the absence of a formal state and security sector. One means of securing protection was the establishment of large private security forces employed directly by the firm. By the late 1990s, some of the private business militia were larger and more dedicated (because they were paid) than the "warlord" militias that had dominated the scene in southern Somalia for most of the first decade of crisis. Second, businesspeople relied on the wider protection afforded by their clan, which exchanged a commitment to mobilize against any threat to the business with the benefits they derived from the business — such as preferential access to jobs, paid positions in the private security sector and loans. Third, for businesses requiring the ability to operate in multiple clan territories or even nationwide, the forging of cross-clan

business partnerships was vital. Having a partner or major shareholder from the clan in which the business placed fixed assets or moved merchandise was a strong guarantee that the business assets would go undisturbed. For transport companies and wholesalers moving goods across the country, this sometimes meant creating vehicular-based private security guard groups that were multi-clan, so that goods could pass through multiple clan areas without incident.

Large businesses had the means to stand up their own private security forces. Most smaller firms, including the many local NGOs that sprung up as implementing partners for international humanitarian agencies, relied on security provided by an emerging private security sector. Initially these armed guards were simply the militia of the local warlord, who was glad to use the local businesses to provide a salary for his fighters (until the warlords came to realize that salaried private guards had little incentive to return to the battlefield).[11] Later, Somali entrepreneurs began establishing formal security companies, and were joined by or partnered with foreign private security companies offering services mainly to international actors in Somalia.

The rise of a sizable and powerful Somali business sector with interests in basic security and order did not, however, translate into a business class with powerful interests in reviving a central government and hence re-establishing security as a public good. Instead, many Somali business elites feared the revival of a strong state, out of concern that it would tax them without providing services, nationalize them, or fall into the hands of a rival clan and be used against them. Though individual business leaders varied in their preferences, most followed the pattern of supporting a combination of private security and informal sources of local order (by financing customary law and local sharia courts) while working either to prevent a central state from emerging at all or working to keep it sufficiently weak that it was able to attract foreign aid but not impose threatening regulations or taxation on businesses.

It was also the case that for some business interests, the use of violence and instability was a tool to use against competitors. Rival businessmen occasionally used their private security forces to attack one another, or allowed them to be borrowed in clashes against rival clans. Because security (or lack thereof) is such a critical factor in determining real estate values in Mogadishu, business investors have been accused of fomenting insecurity in some districts to keep property values in their safer areas artificially high.[12] In sum, businesspeople quickly learned how to manipulate security provision and insecurity to advance their interests.

The most important actors seeking security in this period were the international aid agencies trying to assist victims of war and famine. In 1991, only a handful of aid agencies, most notably the International Committee of the Red Cross, operated in southern Somalia. By 1992 they were joined by a flood of humanitarian organizations, all requiring security

for their compounds, vehicles and personnel. The militias controlling the areas of operation of the aid agencies were the sole providers of protection — modern day *abbaans* — but at a very high cost. At the height of the famine, aid agencies were paying a hundred dollars a day or more per guard, and required battlewagons as escorts for aid convoys that were so expensive that agencies feared their headquarters would shut down their operations if they knew how much they were paying for security. To hide this fact, some aid agencies recorded security expenses under the generic entry "technical support," which was the genesis for the naming of Somali battlewagons as "technicals."[13] Even the International Committee of the Red Cross, which throughout its long history moved in wars zones unarmed (negotiating access with all armed groups) was forced to hire armed protection in southern Somalia in 1991.

That aid agencies were compelled to pay top dollar for protection forces during the 1991-1992 war and famine was a game changer. It became an important source of revenue for militia leaders, and established private security as a major industry and source of employment in south-central Somalia. Twenty years later, conclusions about the role of humanitarian aid funds and Somalia's protection rackets echoed the same theme. An Overseas Development Institute study in 2012 concluded soberly that "a growing culture of protection fees and other financial injections from humanitarian organizations resulted in humanitarian assistance becoming increasing embedded in the political economy of violence" in Somalia (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee, 2012).

The key feature in this evolving political economy of protection was that the very groups providing security for a fee were the ones creating insecurity in the first place. This constitutes a moral hazard in many settings like Somalia, where private security is a lucrative industry. The providers of security risk losing business if law and order are restored; hence, they have a vested interest in perpetuating conditions that require their continued services. This line of reasoning can, if pushed too far, degenerate into conspiracy theory, and this analysis in no way embraces that kind of reductionist logic. Not all non-state security providers conspire to perpetuate what David Keen (2000) calls conditions of "durable disorder." But there is no question that at least some Somali non-state security providers have staged insecurity in order to provide protection, and have worked to undermine the revival of an effective central government and security sector.

Finding ways to draw non-state security providers into hybrid security regimes with the state will require overcoming the powerful economic interests security providers have in maintaining a certain chronic level of insecurity and state weakness. Put another way, the status quo in Somalia today — a very weak state that nonetheless serves to attract foreign aid, and insecurity that is high enough to warrant the hiring of private security firms but not so high as to scare away diaspora investors and foreign aid agencies, diplomats and investors — is an ideal operating environment for private security providers. Their

economic interest in the status quo, combined with the embeddedness of socio-cultural institutions that provide security, create significant resistance to the strengthening of the formal security sector.

### The rise of sharia court militias

In addition to the rise of private business security forces, the late 1990s also saw the ascent of sharia court militias, mainly in the Mogadishu area. These quasi-police forces were primarily drawn from the fighting forces of clan militias, lured away by the prospect of regular pay and a respectable job. Businessmen, who had grown frustrated with the "taxes" charged by warlords with no provision of security in return, underwrote the sharia courts as a means of eroding the power base of the warlords and providing better security in areas where the businesses operated. The sharia courts were neighbourhood and sub-clan based, and provided good security and protection in areas where they operated. They constituted the closest thing to a police force under Somalia's long period of state collapse (Menkhaus, 2004; Barnes and Hassan, 2007). They were disbursed with the ouster of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) by Ethiopian forces in 2007.[14]

## CONTEMPORARY ACTOR AND INTEREST INVENTORY

Who currently provides security to Somali individuals, households and firms, and what drives their behaviour? The answer varies greatly by location.

### Somaliland

In most of Somaliland — the secessionist state in the northwest of the country — public security has been, until recently, excellent for the past two decades. Street crime has been very low; most businesses operate without open security guards; clan clashes have been kept to a minimum; and commercial traffic can move across most of the countryside without armed protection. In a 2012 survey of Somaliland business owners, 80 percent reported that security is high or very high (USAID Partnership for Economic Growth 2012: 7.9). Those same businesspeople did not count security as a significant cost of or constraint on doing business.

The exceptionally high levels of personal security in Somaliland (with the notable exception of the eastern regions of Sool and Saanaag, where the state presence is weak and contested, and where political and clan clashes are worsening) are attributable to a strong social compact between clans and their political elites, in partnership with the modest policing capacities of the Somaliland government. When they occur, violent crimes are

routinely handled in partnerships involving clan elders and the police. Revenge killings do occur but are relatively uncommon, as clan elders, drawing on customary law, usually sort out the compensation payments. Clan militia were disbanded and integrated into the security sector in the 1990s, and though clans can still mobilize an armed force if desired, that has been relatively rare until recently. Foreigners working in Somaliland now require special protection, in the form of government special protection units, in response to several assassinations and threats by the jihadi group Al Shabaab (Menkhaus, 2015: 67-70).

Somaliland's high level of personal security has been the result of a successful case of hybrid governance bringing together customary authorities and law and a modern state (Walls and Kibble, 2010: 39-40). This hybrid arrangement has worked well, in large part because of the very strong social compact or set of norms committing Somalilander clans not to engage in violence to address political grievances or seek revenge. In Somaliland, the government attempts to formalize this hybrid arrangement by enshrining the role of the top elders in the Upper House of Parliament, or *Guurti*. This innovation has been lauded by some but criticized by others, who see the arrangement as delegitimizing, politicizing and co-opting elders who better served society by remaining outside government (Hoehne, 2013).

The social compact described above is under considerable pressure today, however. In the eastern region of Sool, some members of the Dolbahante clan have declared independence from Somaliland and their Khatumo state militia is engaged in frequent attacks on both the Somaliland army and on civilians. To the west, a small group from the Gadabursi clan has also declared independence from Somaliland and has taken up arms as part of the Sultan Wabar militia. And in Somaliland's main cities, youth gangs have dramatically increased in number and activity in recent years, resulting in a spike in crime and insecurity. Increasing levels of public unhappiness with the current government, and claims of corruption and clannism within the government, are eroding the social compact on which Somaliland's public security has been based, and is a source of concern for many observers (Menkhaus, 2015).

This spike in insecurity has, to date, not changed the composition of actors involved in security provision — except in three ways, all related to foreigners. First, major hotels in Somaliland where foreign visitors congregate have a combination of state and private security in and around their perimeters. This is in part due to genuine security concerns (mainly Al Shabaab), but also in response to heightened security requirements of the UN and other external actors. Second, the Somaliland government has created a special oil protection unit for oil companies exploring for hydrocarbons. These units are drawn from the police and army, but will be paid for by the oil companies. The oil protection units risk creating insecurity if local communities view them as armed outside clans seeking to extract resources from them (Menkhaus, 2015; Nichols and Charbonneau, 2014).

Third, special protection units (SPUs) within the police have been in place since 2003 to provide security to international aid agencies and diplomats working in Somaliland.

With the exception of the two rejectionist movements in the far western and eastern regions of Somaliland, clan militias do not formally exist as armed non-state security providers. Non-state armed actors are thus not a significant part of the security landscape in Somaliland. But it is widely understood that the Somaliland National Army is only partially integrated and that, in the event of a major political or communal crisis, clan authorities could orchestrate defections by their lineage from the army. This is already a routine practice in the disputed eastern regions of Somaliland, where clan units have broken away from and reunited with the Somaliland National Army as circumstances dictate.

External state-building and security sector reform (SSR) programs have increased in scope and scale in Somaliland since the early 1990s, but external aid can only claim modest credit for what has largely been locally led state building and provision of security, law and order there. This is, in part, due to the fact that external donors have faced some constraints in the kind of assistance they can provide to SSR in an unrecognized state. But it has mainly been due to the fact that the peace and security prevailing in most of Somaliland has been achieved by Somaliland society, not the state and its external supporters (Bradbury, 2008: 107).

Of the external efforts to support state building and SSR in Somaliland, most have focused on state-society relations, democratization, rights-based police training and counterterrorism support to the Ministry of Interior and security forces. They include:

• *Support for dialogue and cooperation between civil society and the state*. The social contract between Somaliland's strong civic and business leadership and relatively weak government authorities has been critical to the maintenance of peace and security. A few external actors, such as the War-Torn Societies Project, recognized this early on and provided calibrated, well-informed support to efforts to routinize and deepen national dialogue on matters of peace and security, and support to the establishment of an independent local think tank dedicated to peace building (Menkhaus, 2002).

• *Support for democratization and elections*. External support to Somaliland's national and local elections have constituted some of the most critical, robust and visible support to the legitimacy of the government and the endurance of the social contract between state and society. The administrative costs for Somaliland's local council elections in 2012 totalled $11 million, over a tenth of the Somaliland annual budget. Donors covered $8.8 million of the administrative costs, without which the election might not have been possible (Verjee et al., 2015: 14). In addition to underwriting the cost of elections, external actors provided technical support to the electoral board, party training and election monitoring.

• *Police training and support.* The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Civilian Police Project has trained 5,000 Somaliland police in rights-based policing (UNDP, 2015: 26). It has also provided funds for the contribution of police stations, and training and support for cantonment of police weapons. The UN Department of Safety and Security, the UNDP and others also provide financial support and training for the special protection units (ibid.: 27)

• *Youth at risk.* A UNDP program, now called Youth for Change, provides education and training opportunities for thousands of youth associated with gang or other criminal violence, with the aim of eliminating the threat of armed gangs (ibid.: 42).

• *Military assistance.* Direct support to the Somaliland military has been restricted but not entirely eliminated because of the arms embargo placed on Somalia by the United Nations. The most notable recent instance of military assistance occurred in 2015 when the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) donated a large fleet of military vehicles, including armoured personnel carriers, to the Somaliland National Army (Jirde, 2015).

• *Counterterrorism support.* Details of most counterterrorism partnerships with the Somaliland security sector are not in the public domain, but it is widely understood that external actors, including Ethiopia, the United Kingdom and the United States, provide support to various components of Somaliland's counterterrorism architecture, including the Rapid Reaction Unit and Somaliland intelligence-gathering offices.

• *Fungibility and social service aid.* The vast majority of external assistance that has flowed to Somaliland has targeted basic social services such as education and health care. That in turn has freed up some of the tax revenues generated by the Government of Somaliland for other purposes, one of which is expenditures on security. About 50 percent of the annual budget has been devoted to security expenditures (including the national army, Presidential Guard, intelligence, police, custodial corps, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense), a percentage that has not changed despite major increases in the government's budget (from $50 million to over $200 million since 2000) (World Bank, 2014). The fungibility of external aid has indirectly helped to underwrite Somaliland's ability to pay its armed forces, helping the government keep control of the former clan militias that were folded into the army in the 1990s.

### Puntland

In the northeast of Somalia, the autonomous federal state of Puntland has also enjoyed reasonable levels of public security, although that has deteriorated significantly in recent years. The playing field of security providers is more crowded. The Puntland government is the main provider, and possesses a combination of armed security services: the police,

army, Darwiish (rapid reaction force), the Puntland Intelligence Service, and the foreign-financed Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF). These security forces frequently go unpaid for lengthy periods of time, however, and when that occurs they become a major source of insecurity, manning illegal roadblocks to extort payments for passage, engaging in armed crime and occasionally attacking government officials. A news article describing the visit of an international security company to a site where the PMPF was based described the scene as "something out of the Wild West — with nearly 500 soldiers who had gone weeks without pay wandering the main compound and two other small camps, an armory of weapons amassed over two years at their disposal" (Mazzetti and Schmidt 2012). The danger of training security forces but not paying them is obvious, and ends up fuelling the rise of clan paramilitaries and criminal gangs. Notes Andre Le Sage: "It's important to find a way to make them part of a regular force or to disarm them and take control of them. If that's not done, it could make things worse" (quoted in Mazzetti and Schmidt, 2012).

Puntland's military is also viewed as having been captured and controlled by one clan at the expense of others, a blurring of the lines between clan paramilitary units and a national army. In July 2015, unhappy Puntland parliamentarians took the position that they view the Puntland military as a clan militia and not an army.[15]

Puntland has granted international private security companies licences to operate there, a source of considerable controversy. Hart Security, a UK private security company (PSC), was brought in to help build Puntland's capacity to fight illegal fishing and piracy in 2000-2002. Hart initially helped to reduce illegal fishing, but withdrew from Puntland in response to violent internal political divisions that eventually split Hart's own security forces along sub-clan lines and led to security incidents (Hansen, 2008: 577). A Canadian-Somali partnership firm, SomCan, replaced Hart Security for several years (Bridger, 2013). In 2010, Dubai-based Sterling Corporate Services, an affiliate of the South African private security firm Saracen, was contracted to provide training to the PMPF (Cunha, 2013). Its training and support to the PMPF, conducted by foreign security specialists including members of a feared South African paramilitary squad from the apartheid era, reportedly involved financial support in the millions of dollars from the UAE government (Mazzetti and Schmitt, 2012). The PMPF was housed in the same compound as the Puntland Intelligence Service, trained by the US Central Intelligence Agency, which risked blurring support for anti-piracy and anti-Shabaab missions (ibid.). These foreign firms ran into legal troubles over alleged violation of the UN Arms Embargo on Somalia, political problems entangling them in clan rivalries and allegations the armed forces they trained were subsequently used by political leaders in Puntland against political rivals. The PMPF, for instance, was accused of "becoming entrenched under the personal control of the Farole administration and...used, at least on one occasion, as a pool of political oppression" (Bridger, 2013). The UN Monitoring Group goes further in its 2012 report. It concludes

that the PMPF "has no basis in Puntland's constitution or domestic legislation, operating instead as an elite force outside any legal framework, engaged principally in internal security operations, and answerable only to the Puntland presidency. It is therefore questionable as to whether the PMPF can in fact be considered a legitimate 'Somali security sector institution'" (UN Monitoring Group, 2012: 236).

An armed group of growing importance in Puntland is Al Shabaab, which has shifted some of its energies from southern Somalia — where it is experiencing significant setbacks — to both Puntland and Kenya. In Puntland the group exists only as a terror network and, with the exception of an enclave in the Galgala mountains, does not control territory, so unlike in southern Somalia it is not a provider of security for local villagers. Al Shabaab has instead become a major source of targeted assassinations and occasional terrorist attacks, including a devastating suicide bombing targeting UNICEF staff that killed six in April 2015.

Clan militia remain an important non-state armed actor in Puntland, particularly during periods when the Puntland government failed to pay its security forces for months at a time, at which point poorly disciplined clan-based units in the military take matters into their own hands and begin manning roadblocks and demanding taxes. As in Somaliland and South-Central Somalia, regular payment of security sector personnel is key to maintaining some modicum of control over what are otherwise autonomous clan paramilitaries hatted as security forces.

Finally, pirates constituted an important non-state armed group in Puntland from the late 1990s to about 2011. By 2011, global shipping companies began using private off-shore security firms to protect ships passing through shipping lanes off the Somali coast, a practice which dramatically increased the risk associated with piracy and decreased success rates (UN Monitoring Group, 2015: 32-33). Pirate cells largely disbanded from Puntland's coastlines and, in some cases, began operating as armed criminals inland.

The pirates were an unusual case of armed non-state actors whose operations threatened foreign security but who were viewed locally as protectors of Somali fisheries being illegally exploited by foreign trawlers. The fact that the pirates were targeting cargo ships far beyond Somali territorial waters did nothing to undermine the dominant Somali narrative of the pirates as a heroic coast guard. The reality was that the pirates brought considerable sums of wealth and economic activity both to remote and impoverished fishing villages and to Puntland's main cities, a fact which earned them a certain level of goodwill. The multi-million dollar ransoms they secured also attracted the interest and involvement of top Puntland government officials.

Despite this array of complex and poorly controlled armed groups, Puntland's population has enjoyed consistently higher levels of security than residents of south-central Somalia.

As with Somaliland, the key factor has been a fractious but enduring social compact between clans and clan elders to keep disputes managed and (usually) non-violent. Elders in both Puntland and Somaliland have maintained a better capacity to assert authority over their members than is the case in southern Somalia, and that has been a critical factor in maintaining the fragile levels of security residents in those polities enjoy.

As noted above, portions of Puntland's security sector have received both open and clandestine support from the United States, Ethiopia and the UAE. Almost all of this support and training has been focused either on combatting terrorism (in the form of Al Shabaab) or combatting piracy. More recently, the United States has also committed to providing training and equipment to the Puntland police in an arrangement brokered through the Federal Government of Somalia, of which Puntland is a sometimes reluctant member (Villa Puntland, 2015). External actors such as the UN Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) have also been active in facilitating the integration of Puntland forces into the Somali National Army (SNA), a goal that remains in the early stages (Somalia Newsroom, 2014). The UN has been engaged in a variety of rule of law programming in Puntland designed to advance a number of SSR objectives, including professionalization of the police and strengthening of the judiciary (UNSOM, 2014).

### South-Central Somalia

In contrast, populations in south-central Somalia have enjoyed much less physical security over the past 25 years, a pattern that generally holds true today. South-central Somalia has neither seen the rise of a modestly functional government with the ability to provide some level of security, nor has it had the benefit of a robust social compact between clan elders to keep the peace. Conflict and land loss have polarized clan relations to a much greater degree in the south, armed groups are much more numerous and powerful, and although clan elders have been able to reassert some authority since 1991, they do not have the ability to manage conflict as effectively as can their northern cohorts. As a result, the south has been a prime market for non-state security provision. It has also been a place where access to security has been most uneven.

What follows is an inventory of non-state security providers in and around the capital Mogadishu. Importantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive. One of the defining features of Somali security actors is their collusion, cross-penetration, and ability to re-hat.[16]

*Clan militias*

Clans retain an ability to mobilize fighters at short notice. Most of the population is armed and if one's lineage is under attack civilian "reservists" can be called into action

immediately. This category of actor provides security to fellow clan members, but only on a situational basis. As one local observer concluded, "primary security for Somalis is still the clan".[17]

Critically, Mogadishu today is dominated by the various clans of the Hawiye clan family. Although other clans can and do reside and do business in the capital, only the Hawiye clans can mobilize large clan-based militia at short notice. Non-Hawiye residents are required to make arrangements with Hawiye-dominated armed groups for their security.

*Clan paramilitaries*

Of all of the categories of non-state armed groups, clan paramilitaries are the most complex and confusing, as they can manifest themselves as both state and non-state security providers. Clan paramilitaries are typically composed of more or less full-time fighting forces — full time in the sense that the fighters are earning a living though some combination of service involving the bearing of arms. They are organized around and represent the interests of a single clan, although some may have small contingents of members from other clans. During the first 15 years of state collapse in Somalia (1990–2004), clan paramilitaries were organized around the leadership of a militia leader or warlord, and generally by a factional name.[18] Since the establishment of a federal government and numerous federal states, most clan paramilitaries are hatted as part of the formal security sector. The government provides training to these soldiers, but lacks the capacity to vet them and keep track of them, leading to high rates of absenteeism, moonlighting, defections and ghost soldiers (Jorgic, 2015). The UN Monitoring Group notes that the federal government is unable to provide reliable estimates of the numbers of its own armed forces (UN Monitoring Group, 2015: 39).

Hatting a clan paramilitary as part of a formal police or military has many advantages for the militia, its leaders and the clan it protects and represents. It provides legitimacy to the militiamen and their commanders; improves the odds of attracting training, weaponry and a salary from the nascent state and its external benefactors; and can disguise the true clannish motives for deployment of a unit as a security operation of the state. There are risks as well — namely that increasingly robust state authorities will be in a position to wrest control of the fighting force from the clan, and integrate it into a national army.

In Mogadishu, the formal security sector includes the six brigades of the SNA; the National Intelligence and Security Agency; the police force; and special forces, such as Danab and the Alpha Group, which are trained and funded by US and other military and intelligence agencies (Somalia Report, 2012; Shephard, 2014). The FGS's goal is to build up an army of 28,000 soldiers. As of 2015, 13,829 soldiers and 5,134 Somali police personnel were biometrically registered, although that is not a reliable proxy for the number of soldiers in active service (Global Security, 2015). In addition, as many as 13,000 soldiers comprising

the security forces associated with federal states such as Puntland, Jubbaland and Southwest Regional State will eventually be integrated into a common national security sector (ibid.).

While special forces are cross-clan and answer directly to the Somali government, the Somali police and SNA are at present comprised mainly of personnel answering to clan commanders and pursuing clannish agendas. The US State Department 2014 Report on Human Rights sums up the situation succinctly, observing that "civilian authorities generally did not maintain effective control of security forces" (US Department of State, 2014).

Most of the six brigades of the SNA are closely identified with a single clan, which can become deeply problematic when deployed to areas where that clan has claims or aspirations to control valuable land. The Third Brigade, for instance, is a Hawiye/Habar-Gedir dominated force, and is deployed in the prized Lower Shebelle region, where it is ostensibly fighting to liberate territory from Al Shabaab, but where in reality it is mainly used to advance Habar Gedir claims on farmland against rival local claims such as the Biimaal clan. In 2013, an "almost full blown war" exploded in the Lower Shabelle region between locals (some of whom were members of the local police force) and the Third Brigade (Mubarak, 2014). What appeared superficially to be an inexplicable battle within the Somali security sector was in fact a thinly disguised clan war over authority in the Lower Shebelle region (Bahal, 2013; AllAfrica, 2014). A similar situation has occurred in the Middle Shabelle region, producing equally destabilizing results. There, a Hawiye/Abgal clan brigade is waging war against a minority clan, the Shidle, for control of valuable riverine land. Al Shabaab is easily exploiting these abuses, recruiting from among communities fighting the clan-based FGS brigades.

In an assessment of the extent to which clan militia have thoroughly penetrated the SNA, the UN Monitoring Group (2014: 11) offered this sober description: "The complexity of the situation entails a combination of the alleged role of senior army officers and soldiers in the violence, leakages of arms to clan-based militias, use of misappropriated resources to fuel the conflict, business interests in capturing land and other resources and political agendas seeking to influence the federal state-formation process."

Top Somali government officials have at times acknowledged the problem. Defense Minister Abdihakim Haji Mohamud Fiqi recently stated that "transforming a clan-based militia into a national defense force" was the military's biggest challenge (Global Security, 2015). Powerful clan interests in maintaining quasi-autonomous clan paramilitaries have prevented the government from taking effective action to remedy this problem.

Meanwhile, the risks of external support to an army composed of autonomous clan paramilitaries promoting the interests of their own lineage while threatening the

interests of other clans are high. "In today's Somali army," one local analyst concluded, "clan loyalties trump national identity; without this being rectified by rehabilitating and decommissioning clan militias, continuing to arm the Somali army is akin to fueling clan wars" (Mubarak, 2014). But this is easier said than done. In 2014, an exasperated President Mohamud sought to remove all military commanders and replace them with individuals committed to an integrated armed force. He had to back down after being informed that the commanders would leave with all of the soldiers from their clan.[19]

Clan paramilitaries have not only penetrated the army and police; they also work as the armed units answering to district commissioners (DCs), a dynamic described below.

*DC militias*

The role of DCs and their informal security forces are one of the most important, and complex, sources of non-state or quasi-state security provision in the capital.

Technically, DCs, mayors, and other government officials do not have the legal right to command armed groups. In reality, most of the 16 DCs of Mogadishu have carved out fiefdoms using clan-based militias, drawn from a combination of army or police personnel and gunmen from their clan. Some of the DCs constitute contemporary manifestations of the warlords of the 1990s, laying claim to exclusive control over the territory in the districts, operating mafia-like protection and extortion rackets there, ignoring the FGS, and blocking the formal security sector from operating within the district. The more powerful DCs, such as Ahmed Dirie of the strategically important Wadajir district, have even sought to control the hiring and rental contracts of international organizations working and residing in their districts, and have tried to force NGOs to hire their gunmen as security guards.[20] One local observer concluded that "it is best to heed that advice" to avoid security problems.[21] The armed groups answering to DCs are part of the formal security sector inasmuch as some are members of the police or army, but because they are working for DCs in an extralegal fashion, they can also be understood as non-state armed actors. Because they can and do maintain a certain degree of order and protection within the district, they are also eligible for consideration as non-state security providers.

The ascent of DCs and their armed groups as the most powerful non-state (or quasi-state) security providers in Mogadishu has been one of the most vexing state-building problems in the capital and has preoccupied leadership of the FGS. It has been the topic of an ongoing power struggle between the central government, individual strongmen and their clans. Successive mayors, including most famously Mayor Hassan Mohammed Hussein "Mungab" and Mayor Mohamed Nur "Tarzan," have sought to disband DC militias and even had several of the most notorious DCs temporarily arrested. To date they have had only modest success. When he resigned from his position, Mayor Tarzan said dealing with DCs was a nightmare, as each "acted like his own President."[22]

The success or failure of the government's efforts to bring DC paramilitaries under control will be critical to the fate of the FGS. As one news analysis recounts, "many of the district commissioners in Mogadishu are actually warlords with substantial militias, raising fears of a reprise of the terrifying years from the early 1990s until 2006, when warlords divided Mogadishu block by block with roadblocks manned by trigger-happy militiamen" (Dixon, 2012).

Most of the DCs in Mogadishu from 2005 until recently were appointed by the government but with the direct backing of a strongman from their clan. This meant that some DCs served as fronts for militia kingpins who used the DCs to maintain the status quo. Dismissal of those figurehead DCs by the government has been possible, but their replacements generally inherit the same sub-clan gunmen and relations with the militia commander. The most recent, and extensive, set of DC replacements introduced a new generation of young, inexperienced DCs into the political arena. With few instruments of authority and control, many had little choice but to accept a subordinate role to the previous DC and/or his militia benefactor. In one notable case, the new DC was a relative of the old DC and took up residence with him.[23] In another, the mayor provided funds for him to raise his own militia (including two battlewagons) independent of the former DC, a move which succeeded in marginalizing the ousted DC but which only perpetuated the problem of extra-legal armed groups serving district commissioners.[24]

Unlike the clan paramilitaries that have penetrated the SNA, which are deployed into the territory of other clans, the DC paramilitaries tend to stay within their district, which is understood to be the "domain" of their clan or sub-clan — a location where the clan expects to dominate or even monopolize rents, employment and politics. In a number of cases, these districts are cosmopolitan, in the sense that members of any clan can live there and enjoy a degree of protection from the DC militia. In other districts, only members of the dominant clan reside there. In both cases, the DC militias do provide a certain level of protection, and come under a degree of command and control by the DC or the clan militia commander. While they are seen by the federal government and its supporters as dangerous sources of resistance to state building, they are viewed in more ambiguous terms by local residents. Like mafia protection rackets elsewhere, these armed groups provide protection for those who pay or are lineage members, and as such earn a modicum of "performance legitimacy" from communities as a result. This stands in contrast to low levels of trust for the formal police, who routinely demand bribes from victims of crimes as a precondition for action, and release suspects if relatives pay cash (Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention, 2014: 18).

The commissioners' interests are to protect and promote their clan's interests, profiteer from the affordances their position allows and, for the more ambitious among them, use their perch as commander of a district to consolidate their claim as the leading political

figure in their clan. To that end, all of the DCs have an interest in maintaining a reasonable level of security in their districts, if they are capable of achieving it. Those presiding over districts with an enduring Al Shabaab network and with a weak local economy face much greater challenges.

*Business security guards*

Somali businesses cannot rely on weak and corrupt police forces to protect valuable assets, and so from the outset of state collapse have forged arrangements with non-state security providers. The most common arrangement is direct employment of their own private security forces or guards. This is done both to protect assets and in response to pressure from kinsmen to provide employment. Security forces directly employed by businesses tend to be among the most effective and loyal sources of security, but are very limited as a public provider of security. These units can be as small as a few gunmen or as large as 300–400 fighting men. While the amount of security varies with the ebbs and flows of insecurity in the city, larger businesses have, in some cases, had to devote up to 50 percent of their hiring to security (Mushtag, 2008).

Patterns of usage of private security vary by type of business. Businesses with fixed assets (such as a hotel) in a clan stronghold typically only hire security guards from their own clan. This practice also helps to ensure the loyalty of the guards, as the clan views its businesspeople as important assets to protect. Betrayal of the business interest would be seen as betrayal of the entire clan.[25] El Ma'an seaport, for instance, is a major private investment located north of Mogadishu in an area dominated by a single sub-clan. As a result, the entire port is said to be protected by business security forces from one sub-clan, the Abgal/Harti/Warsengeli.[26] Firms that require movement of people and assets across clan lines form multi-clan security forces that allow them to tailor the composition of each security detail by clan affiliation, in effect using the armed guards as ITAL abbaan. Transport companies that move goods and trucks over long distances and across many clan territories will sometimes off-load and on-load security teams at clan "green lines"; in some cases they may even off-load goods onto a new truck, one owned by a businessperson from the local clan. Where security and clan relations are more routinized, trucks are lightly protected, and payment of taxes at checkpoints is all that is required for safe passage.

The most complex and generally effective form of privatized security occurs in Mogadishu's sprawling Bakara market, a massive area of retail shops, warehouses and wholesalers, and the heart of commercial traffic across the entire eastern Horn of Africa. Security is paramount given the enormous volume of goods and money changing hands in Bakara. While Bakara market has at times been the epicentre of armed violence — most notably during the 2007-2008 Ethiopian occupation of the capital — the area has enjoyed a surprising level of security over the years. The security there is ensured by private

business security units working for individual companies. They operate side by side, across clan lines, and rarely fight one another.[27] This same pattern exists in areas of the city where a high concentration of large businesses are located, such as the K-4 area. There, business security groups near to one another have developed informal arrangements to mobilize in support of one another in the event of an incident. They share information and coordinate patrols. These understandings have, according to one local analyst, developed into a culture of obligation. "Business militia have an obligation to help neighbours — it would be shameful if they didn't," he observed.[28] This phenomenon in effect creates security umbrellas in some neighbourhoods, allowing residents and other small businesses there to be "free riders" on the security afforded by the nearby presence of large business security details.[29] Not surprisingly, the value of real estate in the "security umbrella" zones is far greater than elsewhere in the city.

For international hotels and restaurants frequented by Somali politicians or visiting dignitaries, the high cost of security is passed on to customers in the form of much higher tariffs. Guest houses and international hotels in Mogadishu that charge upward of US$200 per night for a room are really in the business of selling security, as the amenities of the hotels are relatively modest. Even so, they are frequently the targets of terror attacks, including the Jazeera Hotel, which was heavily damaged by a truck bomb in July 2015, and the Sahafi Hotel, bombed in November 2015.

Smaller businesses, including local NGOs, are more likely to hire security guards on retainer, to keep costs down and maximize flexibility. They will match the salaries offered by the national army to a soldier who will then go absent from his security sector job for the duration of the contracted task — typically guarding convoys in the city, one of the more dangerous security tasks in Mogadishu.

Somali business leaders typically make public statements that they would strongly prefer to pay taxes to support a viable police force so they can relieve themselves of the high cost and hassle of having to front their own security guards. But the reality is businesses in Mogadishu will need to continue to pay for private security for the lengthy period it will take to mount an effective police force. For that reason, some Somali observers claim businesspeople have quietly opposed the expansion of the government security sector, and resist paying taxes. In the near to mid term, private business security will at best be better regulated by the government, but not replaced by it.

*Personal protection units*

Most high-profile individuals in Mogadishu — MPs, top businesspeople and other VIPs — possess personal security escorts, typically composed of a posse of individuals with close family connections whose loyalty is unquestioned. They provide armed protection for these VIPs at their residence, office and in public, especially while on the road, where

ambushes are frequent on Mogadishu's heavily congested roads. MPs who lack the personal finances to pay for personal security stay in hotels where security is considered good (Said, 2014). Political figures in particular have good reason to seek personal bodyguards – numerous MPs and other government officials have been assassinated or have been targets of failed assassination attempts since 2007 (BBC, 2009; Kriel and St. Claire, 2015). MPs are now assigned special police, but reportedly prefer to rely on private guards. The most common practice is to approach the police for 10 or so private guards from one's own clan and pay them directly.[30] Even top government officials, such as the mayor of Mogadishu and the FGS president, rely on private protection consisting of close relatives (Harding, 2012).[31] Some Somali diaspora interviewed for this study reported that they felt safer not using private security as that tended to attract unwanted attention and made them more vulnerable than when they moved through the city discreetly.[32] Since the government fails to pay soldiers for many months at a time (due to embezzlement of the funds earmarked for soldiers' salaries), soldiers have a clear preference to work as private guards (Jorgic, 2015). The alternative is to desert and begin extorting money at roadside checkpoints, which many have to do. Donor states, especially those such as the United States and United Kingdom, which provide US$100 per month supplements to the soldiers' meager pay, have expressed deep concern over the crisis of non-payment, which threatens to undermine the entire national army (ibid.).

*Local PSCs*

Most international attention on private security companies (PSCs) operating in Somalia has been devoted to international firms, a controversial subject discussed below. But the high demand for personal security in Mogadishu has also led to a boom in the creation of private local security firms, run both by long-time residents and returning Somali diaspora members. Indeed, while reliable figures are not available, it is widely believed that private security is one of the fastest-growing sources of employment in Mogadishu, and a generally lucrative business. "Private security services are the oxygen of the capital," noted one local observer. [33]

The total number of Somali-owned PSCs is a matter of debate. At one point the government claimed it had registered 126, but the Ministry of National Security clarified that only 24 are operational.[34] Many other small and informal security companies are believed to operate unregistered. The larger Somali PSCs employ 80-100 guards, and take on security work for groups as large as the UN in Mogadishu. Since 2012, the UN has contracted with a local security provider, Duguf Enterprise Security Service (DESS), which provides pick-up trucks with armed personnel to facilitate UN movements between the international airport, the UN Common Compound and government facilities (UN Monitoring Group, 2012: 287). Some hotels and guests houses also provide armed escorts as part of a negotiated package for guests.

Not all of the local PSCs are equally competent – interviewees complained that some hire jittery, unreliable guards who can create rather than prevent security incidents, especially in traffic. Although they are not permitted to hire government security forces, they routinely do, as soldiers actively seek opportunities to supplement their income. PSC security personnel are also required by law to wear distinctive uniforms, but in practice their guards often continue to wear their military uniforms.[35] Importantly, the hiring of personnel from the army and police is not a case of "moonlighting" on a second job – it involves high rates of absenteeism from posts in the army and police. The scale of diversion of personnel from their security sector positions to private security is, moreover, enormous. One survey concluded that about 50 percent of all security sector personnel also worked in some capacity in private security (Saferworld, 2012: 2).  Very erratic pay in the armed forces is the main driver of this trend. If salaries – which, including supplements from foreign donors, are about $200 per month for a soldier – were regularly paid, absenteeism would be less a problem.[36] The fact that PSCs draw on and divert manpower from the formal security sector is viewed as a problem in government circles, but is such a widely accepted practice that it will be difficult to overcome. In 2011, the transitional government proposed the creation of an SPU to provide protection for foreign visitors and VIPs, but that proposal was blocked, in part because powerful politicians themselves are major stakeholders in some of the larger private security companies.[37] Once commoditized and privatized, security is not easily returned to the realm of the state. The state did, however, allow licences to expire for PSCs in mid-2014, introducing the prospect of stricter regulations and eligibility requirements in the future.[38] DESS was granted an extension, as an SPU for the UN was not yet in place and the UN could not operate in Mogadishu without officially licensed security.

Despite intense competition between local and international security companies in Mogadishu, PSCs do not have a record of creating security incidents to undermine one another. They have, however, been accused of creating general insecurity as a means of perpetuating conditions that require their services.[39]

The interests that PSCs can have in a sufficient level of insecurity to warrant their services in the economy is a critical question with regard to their longer-term relationship with the formal security sector. There is no clear evidence to suggest that owners of private sector firms are actually staging acts of insecurity to perpetuate conditions that are good for business, but that is always a concern in contexts of weak states and high insecurity. A more realistic concern is that powerful private security sector interests will work subtly to keep the formal security sector weak. The fact that high-ranking officials and powerful clan militia leaders are stakeholders in PSCs suggests that PSCs will remain a part of the security landscape in Mogadishu for the foreseeable future. And the fact that gunmen are profiting from double-dipping as salaried soldiers or police as well as private security guards creates a large group interested in maintaining the status quo.

*International PSCs*

Mogadishu features several types of international private security firms, offering protection services mainly to international clients. They typically rely on Somali armed personnel, although some hire foreign security personnel as well. Some are protection services that bundle both protected guest houses and armed vehicle escorts. Others, such as PBI2, are multi-purpose, offering an array of services including security provision, risk analysis, business consulting and project management.[40] Still others, such as Bancroft and Dyncorps, specialize in training and support of national security forces, and are used as sub-contractors by third party defence and intelligence agencies. Some of the most high-visibility and controversial international PSCs have been brought in on large lucrative contracts by the national government or regional states such as Puntland to assist with the revival of the coast guard or with anti-piracy efforts. Some have been accused by the UN Monitoring Group of violating the UN Arms Embargo on Somalia (UN Monitoring, 2012: 235). In one instance, a Dutch firm, the Atlantic Marine and Offshore Group, won a contract from the FGS in the amount of 100 million euros — more than the entire government budget for that year — to assist it in developing its coast guard (Bridger, 2013).

The international PSCs providing security and safe lodging for visiting international clients in Mogadishu are in direct competition with Somali security providers, a fact that has led to tensions and to pressure on the government to implement restrictive policies designed to squeeze the foreign firms out of the market. Those involving partnerships between foreigners and Somalis stand a better chance of weathering this pressure.[41]

*Al Shabaab*

During the period from 2007 to 2012, while Al Shabaab held large amounts of territory and even much of the capital Mogadishu, it was never in a position to serve as a quasi-government. It did, however, provide impressive levels of local security for populations under its authority. By most standards, Al Shabaab has been the most effective non-state security provider in Somalia, even as it has simultaneously been one of the most dangerous sources of insecurity. The difference has mainly been a matter of geography. If a community resided in an area firmly in Al Shabaab's control, security was high. If communities were located in frontline areas where fighting was intense, or in government-controlled areas targeted by Al Shabaab, the organization was the source of insecurity.

Since 2012, Al Shabaab has lost control of nearly all urban centres, and has been pushed into more remote rural areas. In consequence, the group no longer plays the role of security provider to many settled communities. Instead, its embracing of asymmetrical guerilla war tactics has made it a major source of insecurity for Somalis today.

In addition, Al Shabaab is believed to be morphing into a group devoting more of its energies to extortion than jihad. This research encountered multiple credible sources

reporting that Al Shabaab not only taxes employed Somalis (including government civil servants) and businesses, but targets them for attack if they fail to pay.[42] Terrorist attacks on hotels and restaurants are believed to constitute a pattern driven by a lack of payment of extortion money to Al Shabaab. Reflecting the logic of a protection racket, the group thus provides protection against threats it itself generates.

*Elders and customary law*

The capacity of clan elders to maintain peace and security varies considerably across different locations in Somalia. In Mogadishu, their authority is relatively weak, mainly because they face so many powerful armed actors over which they exercise little leverage. Clan elders continue to play a role at the neighbourhood level, negotiating disputes and preventing conflicts from spiralling out of control, but not for handling wider armed security threats.[43] But clan elders working with district commissioners enjoy a real role in maintaining security. Each neighbourhood or ITAL tabele has a leader elder, or *gudoomiye*, who is paid by the DC. These elders are said to wield real local power, controlling hubs of information gathering, serving as the eyes and ears of the DC.[44] In general, the authority of clan elders has waxed and waned according to circumstances across southern Somalia, but has never recovered to levels enjoyed in the pre-war period.

*Neighbourhood watch groups*

At one time — prior to 2006 — neighborhood watch groups were an important source of non-state security in Mogadishu. When Al Shabaab came to power in the ICU in 2006, however, it eliminated them, and they have been slow to return in their original form.[45] Some local observers contend that neighbourhood watch groups are no longer popular in Mogadishu because it is too dangerous to be seen in public with an open weapon.[46] Instead, residents tend to cluster in neighbourhoods where their sub-clan is predominant, which affords a degree of security and protection to those with memberships in the more powerful lineages in the city. But others argue that neighbourhood watch groups are more active than they appear. "The city's police force is not up to the task of protecting citizens," concludes a 2012 Saferworld study, "so communities have taken matters into their own hands and organised neighbourhood vigilante groups. Armed with weapons including AK47s, the vigilantes can be seen at night behind barricades and fortified positions on the winding, narrow dirt roads leading into densely populated residential areas. In return, they are fed and paid by wealthy members of the community" (Saferworld, 2012: 7). Saferworld's assessment was shared by at least some of those interviewed for this research, who contended that neighbourhoods are again organizing their own security and buying guns.[47] In one case, members of a local football team provided security for the immediate neighbourhood to collect payments used to buy team equipment.[48] Interviewees were in agreement that in other cities in Somalia, such as Garowe, neighbourhood watch groups remain robust.

*IDP gatekeepers*

One of the most ambiguous sources of non-state security are the "gatekeepers" of large internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Mogadishu. Called "black cats" by the Somalis, these individuals preside over a lucrative industry providing space for shelter and protection for IDPs. They sometimes buy up land and then actively seek out IDPs to fill up camps, which then attract humanitarian aid, of which the camp managers take a sizable cut. The gatekeepers claim to provide security in the IDP settlements either through their connections to powerful clan militia or their area, or by employing their own militia, often including police and soldiers.

The actual amount of security provided by the black cats and their security forces varies, however; they are also widely cited as major sources of predation on and assault of the IDPs, especially rape (Tana Copenhagen, 2013: 34). "The gatekeepers who control the camps are themselves very abusive," concludes David Mepham of Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch and others argue that the gatekeepers also prevent the IDPs from leaving, essentially holding them hostage as bait for humanitarian aid (Human Rights Watch 2013).

## PROTECTION DYNAMICS AND NON-STATE SECURITY PROVIDERS

Given this expansive inventory of non-state security providers, what are protection dynamics in Mogadishu today, and what role do non-state security providers play in it?

First, despite improvements since 2012, Mogadishu remains a highly insecure setting, a claim borne out both by empirical data on violent incidents and in the perceptions of local residents.[49] The Armed Conflict Location and Dataset (ACLED) project concluded that Somalia was "the most violent country in the ACLED dataset" and pinpointed Mogadishu as the epicentre for much of that violence (ACLED, 2013: 1). A 2012 Saferworld survey, conducted during a period of marked improvement in security following Al Shabaab's partial withdrawal from the capital, found that most residents described the city as "middle risk" — meaning they could move around the city during the day but not at night — and uneven in security by district (Saferworld, 2012: 10). But what constituted improved security for the city was still astronomically high by global standards, with households reporting that in the previous 90 days, 10 percent experienced a violent injury, five percent armed robbery, one percent kidnapping and two percent rape. Of 800 households surveyed, 124 reported a violent death in the family over the previous 12 months (ibid.: 10-11). In sum, no security provider — state or non-state — is doing an adequate job.

Second, the commoditization of security that arose in the 1990s remains firmly in place today. The principal difference is that the armed groups making money off of

protection from the very insecurity they generate are more numerous and, thanks to their embeddedness in the state security sector, more complex. The commoditization of security has also meant that those with means are better able to pay for and generally enjoy private security. The rest must make do with a mixed strategy of reliance on clan, on neighbourhood watch groups, and on consistently astute security assessments determining where they should live and where they can travel at what times of the day. But the ability to purchase private security does not always guarantee improved security. Residents interviewed for this study made clear that individuals with higher levels of wealth and status are in many ways at greater risk of assassination, extortion, kidnapping and revenge killings. The armed guards they employ can even generate additional security problems — by attracting unwanted attention, by increasing the risk of accidental clashes with other private security forces and by exposing the individual to the risk of an "inside job" by one of his own armed guards.[50]

The geography of protection in Mogadishu reveals a number of patterns. One is the high variation in security and insecurity by district and neighbourhood. Some parts of the city enjoy much higher levels of security than others; at present, six of the 16 districts are seen by locals as safe, and are in consequence overcrowded with residents and businesses. There are multiple reasons for the pockets of security, including the presence of AMISOM and government security forces, the presence of large private business security forces, and clear and uncontested demarcations of clan boundaries. Safer neighbourhoods and districts have attracted Somalis from a wide range of clans, producing more cosmopolitan clusters in safer zones of the city. The concentration of business investments in safer areas of the city has had a mutually reinforcing effect on security, as the businesses' private security generally enhances security, and, as noted earlier, even creates a security "umbrella" in the neighbourhood that free riders enjoy.[51] Property values are the key sensitive indicator of neighbourhood and district security, with enormous gaps between the price of lots in safer zones and unsafe areas. Ironically, the very success of some neighbourhoods to maintain reasonable safety levels has produced traffic gridlock on main roads that can expose individuals to ambushes from which they cannot escape.

Checkpoints by armed groups, mainly hatted as security forces of paramilitaries, remain very common, and are both a flashpoint for armed clashes and a site where armed "protection" morphs into extortion. Over 100 checkpoints were operating in Mogadishu in 2012 (Saferworld, 2012: 11). Most are associated with the militias of specific sub-clans.[52]

Most observers agree that the estimated 1.1 million IDPs in Somalia, 369,000 of whom are in Mogadishu (roughly 30 percent of the total population of the city), are among the most vulnerable groups in the capital (Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2015; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2015). They are failed by both state and non-state security providers. Because most are from weak clans, they are unable to call on their lineage for

protection. They are too poor to buy protection from third parties. And their ability to attract humanitarian aid incentivizes armed groups to prey on them. The security of IDPs is a powerful indicator of the effectiveness of both state and non-state security providers.

No armed group in Mogadishu enjoys a good reputation among residents as a source of protection. On the contrary, almost all are viewed by locals with fear. The 2012 Saferworld study found that roughly half of residents surveyed expressed fear of virtually every type of armed group, including the police, army, Al Shabaab, government allied militias and clan militias (Saferworld, 2012: 14).[53]

Al Shabaab, once a source of robust if brutal law and order in districts of the capital that it controlled, is now mainly a source of extortion-driven violence. It is unique in that it is able to operate across clan boundaries, and across the entire city, making it the most efficient and effective extortion racket. But it is not serving as a bone fide protection racket. It cannot protect those it taxes from other sources of insecurity — it can only pose a threat to those who refuse to pay.

Threats of violence are common to other actors as well. One of the most common complaints of large local or international NGOs, and of business owners, is the heavy pressure they come under to provide jobs, part of what Somalis refer to as the culture of ITAL shahaad, or the obligation to share wealth within the kinship group. This pressure comes from multiple quarters, including clans, criminals, government officials and Al Shabaab, and if not honoured can result in security incidents.[54] Often the demand is for unskilled jobs as security guards. The result is that private and non-profit agencies end up hiring incompetent individuals to appease a clan or others, resulting in bloated but unreliable security guards who, if fired, would constitute a security threat. This is viewed by businesses and non-profits as part of the "cost of doing business" in Mogadishu, or, as one agency official put it, an "early fixed cost."[55]

The multiplicity of armed actors, the high levels of "rehatting" and overlap between various security providers, the significant variations in security by neighbourhood, the extent to which clan identity affects security, and the fact that the main sources of protection are also the main sources of insecurity, all combine to create an exceptionally complex security terrain for Somalis to navigate. To stay safe, residents of Mogadishu have to make sophisticated, daily calculations, with potentially disastrous consequences for mistakes. In this context, one of the most important forms of protection is reliable and timely information. Not surprisingly, residents interviewed for this study frequently alluded to the many ways of maintaining accurate knowledge of local security. Social capital is a highly valued asset, with Somalis investing considerable amounts of time sharing information and advice. Women's groups in neighbourhoods are understood to be especially strong sources, and are tapped by DCs and the neighbourhood elder or *gudoomiye*.

## GOVERNMENT SSR AND INTERNATIONAL AID

External actors seeking to promote order, combat violent extremism and support security sector reform (SSR) in Somalia face a complex array of state, quasi-state and non-state armed actors providing security to some and inflicting insecurity on others. To their credit, most of the external actors engaged in Somali SSR are aware of the complexity of the security environment they are trying to reshape — the defections, the collusion between local rivals, the penetration of the state by non-state actors, the spoilers, the commoditization of security and the sizable impact of foreign interests.[56] Their challenge is not so much diagnosis as it is prescription. According to some observers, SSR in Somalia constitutes a "wicked problem" that defies conventional solutions and tends to produce unintended consequences for those seeking to advance linear, technical solutions (Menkhaus, 2014: 121).

Most external support to SSR in contemporary Somalia has focused on a few core objectives:

• strengthening the capacity of the SNA and other branches of the security sector with training and material support to defeat Al Shabaab and maintain order;

• using financial support for salaries and other benefits as a means of retaining security personnel, integrating allied and other (mainly clan-based) non-state armed groups into a unified command structure in the Somali army, and encouraging defections from Al Shabaab;

• provide employment for a fraction of the enormous number of unemployed youth in south-central Somalia, sometimes as part of a peace dividend for allied armed groups;

• professionalize the security sector to respect civilian chain of command and human rights.

Because of the threat posed by Al Shabaab, state building and SSR in Somalia have been high-priority objectives for the United States, other Western governments, the African Union and the UN. In consequence, the Somali security sector has been the recipient of considerable external military aid, some legal, some in contravention of the UN arms embargo on Somalia. Since the partial lifting of the arms embargo in 2013, the UN Monitoring Group estimates that the government has received more than 17,500 weapons and almost nine million rounds of ammunition (UN Monitoring Group, 2015: 39). In addition to the $500 million spent to underwrite the 22,000-person AMISOM mission, the US government has since 2007 reportedly spent over $170 million on training and support of the Somali security sector (Shinn, 2015: 6).

The United States has focused training on the development of an elite, 150-person counterterrorism special forces unit housed within the Somali National Intelligence

Agency, known as Gaashaan ("The Shield") (Joseph and Maruf, 2014).[57] The training and support of Gaashaan has been done both by a small presence of US special forces and by private contractors such as Bancroft and Dyncorps (Shinn, 2015: 6). Gaashaan has been by far the most effective and professional Somali security force to date, and is seen by some observers as the "skeleton" on which to build a genuine Somali national army (Gannon, 2014). But it has not been immune to the wider political problems of civilian command and control that plague all of the rest of the Somali security sector.[58]

A number of other external actors — including Uganda, Kenya, Turkey, Djibiuti, Sudan, the European Union and China — have either hosted or financed training to different units within the SNA since 2007. High rates of desertion and defection have, however, thrown the value of this support to the Somali security sector into question (Smith, 2010). Abusive behaviour by uncontrolled and clannish military units toward Somali civilians has been an additional frustration and embarrassment for external actors engaged in capacity building and SSR.

Donor states have been well aware of these problems with the SNA for years. On the topic of security assistance in Somalia, two US government officials recently observed that "[w]ithout civilian governance structures to support them, the training of security forces could, at worst, prove destabilizing to the Federal Government and, at best, be a waste of donor funds… To press Somalia to develop a military without a functional government, or a military that does not reflect the Somali political context on the ground is a recipe for folly" (quoted in Sokolsky and Adams, 2015).

As in some other parts of the world where major security threats exist and where the state is too weak or venal to serve as a viable partner, external actors like the United States, Kenya, and Ethiopia have opted to partner with non-state armed groups with often only nominal and contested affiliation to the central government. In the Jubba region of southern Somalia, the Kenyan military, hatted as part of the AMISOM force, works closely with the Ras Kamboni militia, a clan-based paramilitary that is in practice autonomous from the Somali federal government. Ethiopian forces, also part of the AMISOM mission, work in tandem with a number of clan paramilitaries nominally linked to the government. The privileged relationship that these armed groups have with external patrons risks reinforcing their interest in perpetuating a weak state with a dysfunctional security sector. Security partnerships that are essential for short-term counterterrorism goals may inadvertently undermine longer-term goals of state building and SSR.

## CONCLUSION

### Relations between Non-state Security Providers and the State

As this study's actor inventory makes clear, the very distinction between state and non-state armed groups is problematic. Non-state armed groups — especially clan paramilitaries — have successfully adapted to the re-establishment of the formal security sector by colonizing it. The multiple hatting of armed men in Mogadishu, as soldiers or police, private security guards, and members of clan paramilitaries is a good business model as long as external actors are willing to underwrite the formal security sector. But it makes for a weak and unreliable security sector that is not autonomous from more powerful communal groups.

The actor inventory also underscores the fact that the notion of a "security provider" — whether state or non-state — is equally problematic. Most armed groups in contemporary Somalia are both sources of protection and insecurity. In some cases this reflects a basic "security dilemma" in a context of a failed state — clan paramilitaries provide security for their own, but constitute a source of insecurity for other clans. In other cases the police and army are often the main source of predation against residents. In still other cases protection rackets provide security, but from their own threats of violence.

The fact that some of the largest PSCs are owned or co-owned by government officials, including at least one general, creates conflicts of interest and disincentives to effective government regulation of PSCs.[59] Efforts by the government to propose legislation to regulate PSCs have either been held up or have been widely ignored and unenforced. This includes a regulation from 2012 banning security sector personnel from working as security for private individuals (Saferworld, 2012: 13).

This inability to regulate non-state security providers is a reflection of the weakness of the state vis-à-vis other social and private interests. The cost of lack of regulation has been noted by many. "As Somalia rebuilds its security institutions, the Government should ensure that private security forces are properly regulated and do not become a substitute for competent and accountable police," observed Faiza Patel, head of the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries. "All Somalis have the right to security, not just those who can afford to pay for it" (UN News Centre, 2012).

One of the few partially effective measures to regain government control of non-state security providers was the attempt by Mogadishu mayors to replace all DCs and prevent new DCs from maintaining their own paramilitaries. But even that move has not, to date, appreciably changed the role of DCs as commanders of armed forces of questionable legality.

Perhaps the most distressing weakness of the government is its inability to control its own army brigades, which remain de facto clan paramilitaries pursuing their own interests. Until it can achieve this modest goal, it is unlikely to be able to exercise much regulatory capacity over PSCs.

## Prospects for Integrating Non-state Security Providers into a Mediated State

The ubiquity of non-state security providers in Somalia has been both a major impediment to the development of an effective security sector and a potential opportunity. They have been impediments in that they provide powerful tools for political spoilers seeking to thwart the building of an effective state and a security sector under the full control of the state. They also sometimes reflect private sector interests in perpetuating a weak security sector and conditions of insecurity so that their security services continue to be required. And in some instances they are actually a major source of insecurity rather than protection.

At the same time, some non-state security providers – especially those working for businesses and for PSCs – have been among the most reliable and professional sources of organized protection in the city.

At the national level, the weak Somali government has had little choice but to forge negotiated relationships with a range of self-declared regional authorities in order to enjoy token claims of government control over territory outside its direct authority. The Somali federal government is in its present form a "mediated" state – that is, one in which powerful armed intermediaries control relations between an aspiring state authority and its citizens.

Studies on state fragility, state building and state formation suggest that mediated states are more common than is often acknowledged (Raeymaekers, Menkhaus and Vlassenroot, 2008; Meagher 2012). They also note that mediated states can reflect lengthy transitional periods involving messy, negotiated, hybrid relationships between aspiring sovereign authorities and local armed groups that are often more powerful and locally legitimate (Tilly, 1985; Lund, 2006). The process by which state authorities eventually gain primacy over non-state and sub-state security providers involves a combination of negotiation, confrontation and co-optation, and relationships with the "non-sovereigns" that feature complex mixtures of shared and conflictual interests. In the long run, the central government's chief asset is its sovereignty, which it can convert into a range of tangible advantages, including access to loans, aid and military support, and control of the laws of the land.

In the Somali case, integration of non-state and state security providers has already happened. But the colonization of the formal security sector by non-state armed groups has been entirely on terms of the non-state actors. The difficult task for the government leaders and their external supporters will be to gradually outmanoeuvre the clan paramilitary leaders, ideally by using the state's control of salaries and resources to win over allegiance of police and soldiers. Paying attractive wages to soldiers and police, and paying them on time, is key to this effort. This will involve a commitment to combatting corruption inside the government that has not been in evidence. Once effective command and control is established in the security sector, then the government will be better placed to enforce control over the district commissioner paramilitaries that to date have resisted oversight.

As for the many PSCs and business protection forces, those will likely need to remain in place for the foreseeable future, given the high demand for security in the capital. Basic, effective regulation of the PSCs is within the reach of the government, if it keeps its regulations modest and non-threatening to the powerful interests in the sector.

## NOTES

1. For detailed treatment of spoilers, see Stedman (1997).

2. For our purposes, the terms "non-state security provider" and "armed non-state actor" are treated as more or less synonymous. No significant actors engaged with provision of security, including clan elders and sharia courts engaged in conflict resolution and prevention, do so without. Likewise, very few armed actors are able to operate with complete indifference to the security of the communities in which they operate, so even highly predatory groups like criminal gangs are, at least nominally, security providers to some constituents.

3. Because of the high levels of insecurity in Somalia today, personal risks can be high for residents who agree to be interviewed on sensitive topics like non-state security providers. For this reason, information drawn from field interviews will not reveal the names of the interviewees. This was frequently a pre-condition for interviews.

4. For details of how clan and clannism worked in pre-colonial Somalia, see Lewis (1961); Lewis (1994); Laitin and Samatar (1986); and Cassanelli (1982).

5. Under Barre, and in some places under Italian colonial rule, clan elders were given salaries and titled positions by the state, so technically they were "quasi-state" authorities, but still were applying customary law rather than civil law to resolve crimes.

6. The obligation to assist intensifies with closer lineage relationships, hence sub-clans (the smaller lineage divisions within larger clan families) are more important as sources of social insurance.

7. Customary law and clan authorities, and sharia law and Islamic authorities, co-exist in Somalia, but the relationship varies from place to place. In some locations, Al Shabaab has sought to ban customary law and implement strict sharia law. In other cases, communities operate in a dual legal system, and can opt for either sharia or customary law.

8. The generalizations that follow are based mainly on the author's observations and field notes from the summer of 1991, when he worked in southern Somalia with international aid agencies on famine needs assessment.

9. Author's field notes, September 1993.

10. *Qat* is a mild narcotic drug chewed daily by many Somalis. The cuttings of the plant are imported each morning fresh from the highlands of Kenya or Ethiopia where it is cultivated. Individuals controlling the *qat* trade have made large fortunes off the trade.

11. Author's field notes, 1993.

12. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

13. Author's field notes, June 1991.

14. The Ethiopian National Defense Force launched a major offensive in southern Somalia in late December 2006 after months of mounting tensions with the ICU, which gained control of Mogadishu and most of southern Somalia in June 2006. Though the ICU was an umbrella group encompassing a broad spectrum of groups, from sufi Muslim clerics to nationalists to salafis to jihadists, hard-liners in the ICU – in particular the military wing later known as Al Shabaab – pushed the group into increasingly radical rhetoric and confrontational positions with neighbouring Ethiopia. The Ethiopian invasion and occupation ousted the ICU and ended the role of sharia courts in the capital, but led to Al Shabaab regrouping and launching what it saw as a war of liberation against the foreign occupiers.

15. Confidential correspondence, July 22, 2015.

16. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

17. Ibid.

18. From 1991 to the late 1990s, clan militias and political leadership fronted as factions with anodyne names such as the "Somali United Congress," "Somali National Front," and "Somali Patriotic Movement." All were in English, meant for external consumption, and almost all were thin disguises for clannist movements. The factions gradually

disappeared from the political landscape, although the clan paramilitaries remained in place.

19. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

20. As noted above, this reflects an old practice by militia leaders of getting aid agencies to underwrite the salaries of their militias.

21. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

22. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

23. Ibid.

24. The district in question is Daynille. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

25. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

26. Ibid.

27. Author's interviews, summer 2014.

28. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

29. This observation was first made by the author in fieldwork on Mogadishu in 2005 and was confirmed in summer 2014 interviews.

30. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid. The author's own security detail included government soldiers who openly wore their military uniforms while working as private guards.

36. Base pay for soldiers is US$100 per month.

37. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

38. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

39. Ibid.

40. See http://www.pbi2.com/index.html.

41. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

42. Author's field notes, summer 2014; phone interview August 2015.

43. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Empirical data on criminal and political violence is collected both by the UN Department of Safety and Security and by the NGO Safety Program. That data is sensitive and as a result not available in the public domain. Because of the author's role as a periodic consultant on conflict assessments for the UN, he has been able to view this data and can confirm that rates of violence remain high.

50. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Unfortunately the survey did not ask about residents' attitudes toward private security firms.

54. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

55. Ibid.

56. The reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia shed light on these dynamics and are publicly accessible. In addition, the more established and experienced external actors engaged in the security sector, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and the UN possess strong in-house analytic capacities and also commission actor inventories, conflict analyses and political economy assessments to further illuminate some of the interests and alliances that drive Somali political and security calculations.

57. Gaashaan is divided into two units, the Alpha Group (known locally as Dashan, or "lightning") and Bravo Unit. Many references to the Somali special forces refer to only to Dashan.

58. During the period when this fieldwork was conducted, the force was weakened by a feud between an outgoing and newly appointed commander.

59. Author's field notes, summer 2014.

## REFERENCES

ACLED (2013). "Country Report: Somalia." Available at: http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ACLED-Country-Report_Somalia_April-2013.pdf.

Ahram, Ariel I. (2011). "Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 5, no. 2: 175-92.

Alden, Chris, Monika Thakur and Matthew Arnold (2011). *Militias and the Challenges of Post-Conflict Peace*. London and New York: Zed Books.

AllAfrica (2014). "Somalia: National Army Clashes over Clan Loyalty, 8 Killed." June 7.

Andersen, Louise, Bjørn Møller and Finn Stepputat (eds.) (2007). *Fragile States and Insecure People? Violence, Security, and Statehood in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan and Danish Institute for International Studies.

Ayoob, Mohammed (2007). "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure." In *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall. Pages 95-114. Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace.

Bahal, Nur (2013). "The Mugging of Lower Shabelle." *Somaliland Press*, April 4.

Baker, Bruce (2011). "The Future is Non-State." In *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, edited by Mark Sedra. Pages 208-28. Waterloo: The Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Baker, Bruce, and Eric Scheye (2007). "Multi-Layered Justice and Security Delivery in Post-Conflict and Fragile States." *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 4: 503-28.

Barnes, Cedric, and Harun Hassan (2007). "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts." London: Chatham House Africa Programme Briefing Paper.

BBC (2009). "Somali MPs Flee Assassinations." *BBC News*, June 24.

Berdal, Mads, and Dominik Zaum (eds.) (2013). *Political Economy of Statebuilding: Power After Peace*. London: Routledge.

Bradbury, Mark (2008). *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey.

Bridger, James (2013). "Searching for a Somali Coast Guard." Center for International Maritime Security, October 8.

Cassanelli, Lee (1982). *The Shaping of Somali Society*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Clunan, Anne L., and Harold A. Trinkunas (eds.) (2010). *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cunha, Pedro Barge (2013). "Somalia as a Market for Private Security and Military Companies: Definitions, Agents, and Services." In *State and Societal Challenges in the Horn of Africa,* edited by Alexandra Magnólia Dias. Pages 78-89. Lisbon: Center of African Studies, University Institute of Lisbon.

Debiel, Tobias, Rainer Glassner, Conrad Schetter and Ulf Terlinden (2009). "Local State-Building in Afghanistan and Somaliland." *Peace Review* 21, no. 1: 38-44.

Dixon, Robyn (2012). "Mogadishu, Somalia, Leader Knows He Might Not Survive Being Mayor." *Los Angeles Times,* September 17.

Fukuyama, Francis (2011). *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Gannon, Derek (2014). "Somalia's Got a New Commando Squad." *War is Boring,* July 17.

Geneva Call (2007). *Towards a Holistic Approach to Armed Non-State Actors?* Geneva: Geneva Call and the Program for the Study of International Organization(s).

Global Security (2015). "Somali National Army." Available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org

Hansen, Stig (2008). "Private Security and Local Politics in Somalia." *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no 118: 585-598.

Harding, Andrew (2012). "Meet the Mayor of Mogadishu: Somalia's Tarzan." *BBC News,* November 15.

Hoehne, Markus (2013). "The Limits of Hybrid Political Orders: The Case of Somaliland." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, no. 2: 199-217.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2015). "Somalia IDP Figures 2015." Available at: http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/somalia/figures-analysis.

Innes, Michael (2012). *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates, and the Use of Force.* Washington, DC: Potomac Books.

International Committee of the Red Cross (2010). "Building Respect for Humanitarian Action and IHL among 'Other' Weapon Bearers." October 29.

Jirde, Mustafe (2015). "UAE Military Aid Reaches SL." *Somaliland Informer,* July 3.

Jorgic, Drazen. (2015). "Failure to pay Soldiers Threatens Somalia's War on Islamists." *Reuters,* October 8.

Joseph, Dan, and Harun Maruf (2014). "US Trained Somali Commandos Fight Al Shabab," *Voice of America*, July 31.

Kapteijns, Ludwien (2014). *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Keen, David (2000). "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, edited by Mats Berdal and David Malone. Pages 19-42. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Kriel, Robyn, and Pat St. Claire (2015). "Somali Parliament Member Killed by Al Shabaab." *CNN*, July 25.

Laitin, David, and Said Samatar (1986). *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*. Boulder: Westview.

Lawrence, Michael (2012). *Towards a Non-State Security Sector Reform Strategy*. SSR Issue Paper No. 8. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Lewis, I.M. (1961). *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

Lund, Christian (ed.) (2007). *Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mazzetti, Mark, and Eric Schmitt (2012). "Private Army Formed to Fight Somali Pirates Leaves Troubled Legacy." *New York Times*, October 4.

Marchal, Roland (1993). "Les *mooryaan* de Mogadiscio. Formes de la violence dans un espace urbain en guerre" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 33, no. 2: 295–320.

McFate, Sean (2014). *The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meagher, Kate (2012). "The Strength of Weak States? Non-State Security Forces and Hybrid Governance in Africa." *Development and Change* 43, no. 5: 1073-1101.

Menkhaus, Ken (2002). "Interpeace-ADP Somaliland Project Evaluation." Geneva: Interpeace.

——— (2006-2007). "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping." *International Security* 31, no. 3: 74-106.

——— (2007). "Local Security Systems in Somali East Africa." In *Fragile States and Insecure People? Violence, Security, and Statehood in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Louise Anderson, Bjørn Møller and Finn Stepputat. Pages 67-97. New York: Palgrave MacMillan and Danish Institute for International Studies.

——— (2008). "Somalia: Governance vs. Statebuilding." In *Building States to Build Peace*, edited by Charles T. Call and Vanessa Wyeth. Pages 187-215. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

——— (2010). "Non-State Actors and the Role of Violence in Stateless Somalia." In *Violent Non-State Actors in Contemporary World Politics*, edited by Klejda Mulaj. Pages 343–380. London: Hurst.

——— (2012). "Local Security Arrangements in Somali-Inhabited Areas of the Horn of Africa." In *Rethinking the Foundations of the State, An Analysis of Post-crisis Situations*, edited by Claske Dijkema et al. Paris: Emile Bruylant.

——— (2014). "Stabilization in Practice: The Somali Case." In *Stabilization Operations, Security and Development: States of Fragility*, edited by Robert Muggah. Pages 120-142. London: Routledge.

——– (2015). "Conflict Assessment 2014: Northern Kenya and Eastern Somaliland." Nairobi: Danish Demining Group, March.

Mubarak, Mohamed (2014). "Somali Military Has More Problems Than Lack of Guns." *African Arguments*, February 24.

Mushtag, Najum (2008). "Walking the Line Between Business and War." *InterPress Service*, November 14.

National Intelligence Council United States of America (2008). *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*.

Nenova, Tatiana (2004). "Private Sector Response to the Absence of Government Institutions in Somalia." Unpublished paper. Nairobi: World Bank. Available at: http://www.somali-jna.org/downloads/nenova-somalia-privatesector.pdf.

Nichols, Michelle, and Louis Charbonneau (2104) "Exclusive: UN Experts Wary of Somaliland Plan for Armed Protection Unit." *Reuters*, May 30.

Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention (2014). "Mogadishu Conflict and Security Assessment Report: Eastern Zone." Mogadishu, Somalia, June.

Hammond, Laura, and Hannah Vaughan-Lee (2012). "Humanitarian Space in Somalia: A Scarce Commodity." London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI), HPG Working Paper.

Human Rights Watch (2013). "Hostages of the Gatekeepers: Abuses of Internally Displaced Persons in Mogadishu, Somalia." New York: Human Rights Watch. March.

OECD-DAC (2011). *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility.* Paris: OECD.

Villa Puntland (2015). "Puntland and US Agree to Cooperate on Police Training and Counter-Terrrorism." *VillaPuntland.com*, September 30.

Raeymaekers, Tim, Ken Menkhaus and Koen Vlassenroot (2008). "State and Non-State Regulation in Africa's Protracted Crises: Governance without Government?" *Afrika Focus* 21, no. 2: 7–21.

Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (2015). Summary Report (August). Available at: http://regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/monthly%20summaries/August_2015_Summary.pdf.

Risse, Thomas, and Ursula Lehmkuhl (2006). "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood – New Modes of Governance?" SFB-Governance Working Paper Series No. 1. Berlin: FreieUniversität Berlin.

Said, Ahmed (2014). "Somalia: Slaughtering of MPs." *Somali Current*, July 14.

Saferworld (2012). "Mogadishu Rising? Conflict and Governance Dynamics in the Somali Capital." London: Saferworld.

Schneckener, Ulrich (2009). "Spoilers or Governance Actors? Engaging Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood." SFB-Governance Working Paper Series No. 21. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.

Scott, James C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Sedra, Mark (ed.) (2010). *The Future of Security Sector Reform*. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Shephard, Michelle (2014). "Somalia's New War Order." *Toronto Star*, May 25.

Shinn, David (2015). "Somalia, Al Shaabab, the Region, and US Foreign Policy." *International Policy Digest*, April 19.

Smith, David (2010). "US Trained Somali Soldiers Defect to Al Qaeda." *The Guardian*, April 10.

Sokoloksy, Richard, and Gordon Adams (2015). "Governance and Security Sector Assistance: The Missing Link — Part I." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 12.

Somalia Newsroom (2014). "Putting the Puzzle Together: What Does the Future Hold for Somalia's Military Forces?" October 24.

Stedman, Stephen. (1997). "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes." *International Security* 22, no 2: 5-53.

Tana Copenhagen (2013). "Gatekeepers in Mogadishu." The Somalia Cash Consortium. Available at: http://adesoafrica.org/download/561fa7ff0f542/.

Tilly, Charles (1985). "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 169-91.

USAID Partnership for Economic Growth. (2012). "2012 Somaliland Business Confidence Survey." Hargeisa: USAID.

UN News Centre (2012). "Somalia: UN Experts on Use of Mercenaries Urge Greater Oversight for Private Security Contractors." December 18.

UN Monitoring Group for Somalia and Eritrea (2012). "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011): Somalia."

UN Monitoring Group for Somalia and Eritrea (2015). "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2182 (2014): Somalia."

UNSOM (2014). "UNSOM Rule of Law Team Meet Puntland's President Gaas on Security Sector Reform." *Reliefweb*, September 25.

US Department of State (2014). "2014 Human Rights Reports: Somalia."

Walls, Michael, and Steve Kibble (2010). "Beyond Polarity: Negotiating a Hybrid State in Somaliland." *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 1: 31-56.

World Bank (2014). "Budget Policy: Transitioning from State-building to Development." Hargeisa: Somaliland Economic Conference Presentation.

The Centre for Security Governance (CSG) is a non-profit, non-partisan think tank dedicated to the study of security and governance transitions in fragile, failed and conflict-affected states. Based in Canada, the CSG maintains a global, multi-disciplinary network of researchers, practitioners and academics engaged in the international peace and security field.

**WWW.SECGOVCENTRE.ORG**

Centre for
**Security**
**Governance**