



## Somalia – developments during President Mohamud’s first year in office

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On 10 September 2012 [Hassan Sheikh Mohamud](#) was elected the new president of Somalia by parliamentarians in Mogadishu, decisively defeating the incumbent, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. His election was the culmination of an intense final few months of Somalia’s long transitional period. During August 2012, in line with a ‘road map’ agreed by stakeholders in late 2011/early 2012, a provisional Constitution was adopted and the membership agreed of both a new, much smaller, parliament and a constituent assembly tasked with drafting a final Constitution. In the same month, the mandate of the corrupt and discredited Transitional Federal Government expired.

Mohamud’s election was described at the time by [David Cameron](#) as a “great step forward” for Somalia. Combined with continuing military set-backs for the militant Islamist group al-Shabaab, which had lost control over significant tranches of territory over the last year or so, official optimism about Somalia’s future was greater than it had been for many years – although there was plenty of scepticism from other observers. For example, [Roland Marchal](#) argued that “the new institutions are likely to have no more legitimacy [than the TFG did] since the whole roadmap process appears to be overly influence by foreigners [...] Britain and the US have fallen for their own propaganda.”

So what have been the main developments over the last 12 months? Are the optimists or the sceptics being proved right? The picture is mixed.

Al-Shabaab has suffered further important military reverses – most notably, losing control over Somalia’s strategically vital second city, the port of Kismayo, and all of its remaining territory in the far south of the country. Al-Shabaab has also experienced a violent split over the last year, with two senior figures, Hassan Dahir Aweys and Mukhtar Robow forcefully expelled by Ahmed Abdi Godane, the group’s ‘Emir’. Aweys is now in government custody; Robow is still at large. Some view these clashes as spelling the [beginning of the end of al-Shabaab](#), with the group in danger of fracturing along clan lines. But it has not lost its capacity to launch regular [violent attacks](#) on government-held areas, including Mogadishu, or defend itself in skirmishes with pro-government forces. There have also been recent reports that Eritrea has resumed support to al-Shabaab, in violation of a 2009 UN arms embargo.

However, as the two BBC maps over the page indicate – the one on the [left](#) is a year old, the other on the [right](#) shows the current situation – al-Shabaab retains control over large parts of the south and centre of Somalia, even if these areas are now separated by the existence of a ‘pro-government’ corridor between Mogadishu and the Ethiopian-held town of Baidoa.

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### Who runs Somalia?



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The security gains made by pro-government forces over the last 12 months have not yet translated into a significantly strengthened Somali Federal Government. Since Kismayo fell in October 2012 to an alliance of Kenyan forces, officially part of the African Mission in Somalia [AMISOM], and a local militia called the 'Ras Kamboni Brigade', led by Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, the latter ([with Kenyan consent](#)) has effectively taken over the government of the port city and surrounding areas. In May 2013 it declared a new polity in the south called 'Jubaland'. The Federal Government has agreed to accept this arrangement for a two-year interim period. Meanwhile, there has been no progress in bringing Somaliland back into the federal fold. Relations between the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and the Federal Government have also deteriorated recently. Neither Somaliland nor Puntland attended an [international donor conference](#) on Somalia in May 2013, at which [\\$300m was pledged](#).

International donors, including the UK, continue to give President Mohamud [strong public support](#). He has a virtually impossible job to do. However, during his administration has barely begun to address many of the [crucial tasks](#) it inherited from its discredited predecessor, the Transitional Federal Government, such as completing a final Constitution or securing agreement on how a federal Somalia would operate. Nor does it seem to have made a great deal of progress in combating official corruption. A July 2013 UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea report argued that [not much has changed](#), alleging that: a large percentage of withdrawals from the Central Bank had been for private purposes: a significant proportion of Mogadishu port revenues was going missing every month; and that the immigration service was heavily implicated in fraud in connection with the issuing of passports and visas. The Somali Federal Government has repudiated the report, with the Governor of the Central Bank, [Abdusalam Omer](#), accusing it of being "completely unfounded, unsubstantiated, defamatory and reckless." International support to [AMISOM](#) also continues.

#### Background reading and other issues

Several Library briefings on Somalia were published in February 2012: SN06115, [Somalia: recent political, security and humanitarian developments](#); SN06237, ["Preventing and prosecuting piracy at sea: legal issues"](#); SN03794, ["Shipping: piracy"](#); SN06238, ["Does Somali piracy have any developmental effects?"](#)

Library Research Paper 08/86, [Interlocking crises in the Horn of Africa](#) (24 November 2008)

House of Commons [adjournment debate](#) on the decision of Barclays Bank to withdraw banking services from small- and medium-sized community-based money transfer agencies, 17 July 2013