



The flags of Somalia and Turkey fly at Aden Abdulle International Airport, Mogadishu, as the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, arrives for an official visit to the troubled nation. © UN PHOTO/STUART PRICE

# TURKEY AND SOMALIA: MAKING AID WORK FOR PEACE

Turkey has become a more visible global actor over the past decade. Its growing aid budget, which made it the world's third largest humanitarian donor in 2013, has increasingly been focused on conflict-affected states. Since 2011, through the deployment of high numbers of aid workers to Mogadishu, the Turkish government and Turkish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have markedly expanded aid operations in Somalia.

Described by Somali stakeholders as tangible, visible and of high impact, aid from Turkey has been broadly welcomed. Nonetheless, as the experience of other international donors over the past two decades has shown, aid can have unintended effects for peace and conflict in Somalia. Alongside an overview of Turkey-Somalia relations, this briefing paper identifies the ways in which aid from Turkish agencies has been at risk

of unintentionally fuelling conflict dynamics. It makes recommendations for how both official and civil society aid agencies can address these risks and capitalise on existing opportunities to contribute to lasting peace in Somalia. The briefing concludes with a specific set of recommendations for policymakers seeking to further develop the Turkish government's foreign policy concept of humanitarian diplomacy.

## INSIDE



- Turkey's rise and humanitarian diplomacy
- Aid and conflict dynamics in Somalia
- Overview of Turkey-Somalia relations
- Official and non-governmental aid from Turkey
- Risks and opportunities for peace
- Implications for international aid to Somalia

# INTRODUCTION

Following the outbreak of famine in parts of Somalia in mid-2011, Turkish politicians, officials, aid workers and businessmen travelled to the country and began to lay the foundations of a relationship that has become one of the most notable aspects of Turkey's emerging international profile. Over the past decade Turkey's government has become an increasingly engaged global actor, focusing its diplomatic attention and growing aid budget on conflict-affected states. Turkish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also delivering increasing quantities of aid to these countries.

This briefing presents the key findings of research on Turkey's aid to Somalia. It focuses on both Turkey's official aid and that from Turkish NGOs, many of whom are extremely visible actors in Somalia and are considered to be part of a wider Turkish effort to support the country. The research did not assess the impact of individual aid projects or seek to make a broader judgement on the humanitarian or development impact of aid from Turkey as a whole. Instead, the research highlighted different ways in which aid from Turkish agencies has been at risk of inadvertently fuelling conflict dynamics in Somalia. At the same time, a number of opportunities for aid from Turkey to contribute to long-term peace and stability were identified.

The topic is important for several reasons. First, Turkey has come to be perceived by many Somalis as one of the country's most important international partners and aid plays a central role in the relationship. Second, Somalia represents a useful case study in which to begin to understand the role of Turkish aid agencies as emerging actors on the world stage. Third, experiences from Somalia should help inform Turkish policymakers and NGOs on how their aid could be better used to promote peace in other conflict-affected states where it is increasingly being spent. Finally, their experience in Somalia may prove useful in informing how other international donors – who face many of the same challenges – can more effectively support Somalia.



Fishing boats in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Starting in 2011, a wide range of Turkish aid agencies have been working in the city. © KIZILAY

## KEY FINDINGS

- Turkey has become a more visible global actor over the past decade. Linked to the concept of 'humanitarian diplomacy', aid has increasingly been focused on conflict-affected states.
- Aid plays a central role in Turkey's engagement in Somalia and underpins its largely positive reputation in the country. Somalia has remained within the top five largest recipients of official assistance from Turkey and, after Syria, is the biggest beneficiary of aid from its NGOs.
- Aid provided through Turkish government and NGO agencies operating on the ground has shifted from relief to development projects in a range of sectors, notably health, education, physical infrastructure and statebuilding. An explicit focus on making aid work for peace could present the next step in the evolution of aid delivery.
- As other donors have experienced, Somalia has been a challenging context for Turkish aid agencies. They have faced a number of risks related to inadvertently fuelling conflict, including through initially limited levels of knowledge of conflict dynamics, diversion of aid into the war economy, corruption and capture of aid by political elites, and the concentration of assistance to Mogadishu.
- Turkey's reputation and deep engagement in Somalia puts both its government and NGOs in a strong position to make aid work for peace, including a focus on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding, and putting accountable, inclusive and legitimate politics at the centre of statebuilding while linking it to mediation efforts, reconciliation and bottom-up approaches.
- Turkey's experience in Somalia holds important lessons for the further development of the government's concept of humanitarian diplomacy.

# TURKEY'S RISE AND HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

Having joined the ranks of the world's twenty largest economies, deepened its commercial ties overseas, greatly extended its number of overseas embassies and widened relations with new partners in Africa and Asia, Turkey is increasingly considered to be a 'rising power' on the world stage.<sup>1</sup> Turkey's rise has been underpinned by two key dynamics. The first is the international system itself, currently undergoing shifts of global power and prosperity. The second is a period of sustained economic growth and relative political stability within Turkey over the past decade.

Turkey's rising power status also derives its authority from a foreign policy that prioritises engagement with its wider region, encompassing the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Caspian, Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The Turkish government has explicitly sought to reinvigorate relations within this wider geography by building on shared historical, cultural, religious, political and economic ties and focusing on efforts to promote stability. Given the international community's interests in this turbulent area, Turkey's position is thus perceived by its policy-makers to make it both a regional power and a strategically important global actor.<sup>2</sup>

Turkey's attempts to promote stability in its wider region have not always proved successful.<sup>3</sup> These setbacks have not, however, dented Ankara's promotion of the concept of 'humanitarian diplomacy', which has been used to frame Turkey's recent foreign policy and determine its future direction.<sup>4</sup> While still an evolving concept, in policy rhetoric humanitarian diplomacy claims to embrace humanitarian modes of engagement, accentuating the human aspect of international relations while rejecting exclusive reliance on the hard power logic of *realpolitik*.<sup>5</sup> Peace mediation in conflict-affected states has been an important tool of humanitarian diplomacy, with Ankara for example promoting Sunni-Shiite reconciliation in Iraq or hosting talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan. More traditional forms

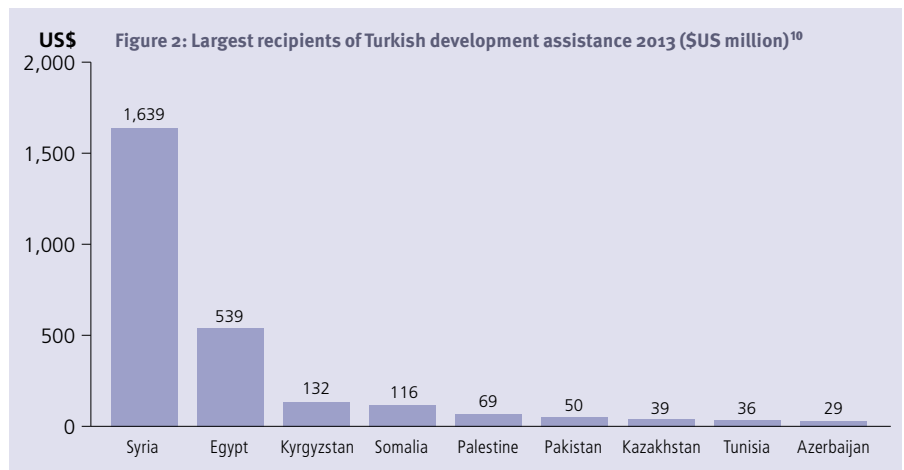
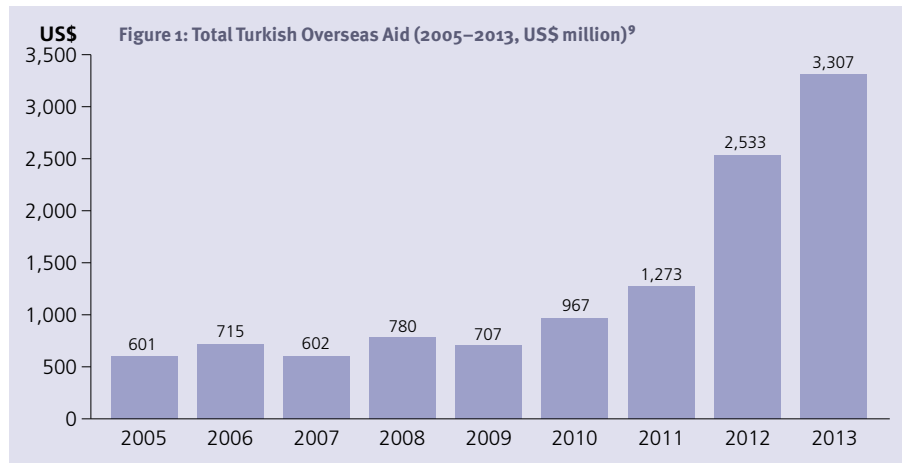
of security assistance have also been used, for example by providing troops for peace-keeping missions in unstable countries or training for their security forces. Moreover, it is argued by officials that Turkey deploys a 'multi-track' approach, whereby multiple actors, including NGOs and businesses, shape and implement its foreign policy through their international activities.<sup>6</sup>

Another way in which the Turkish government has sought to pursue its values-based foreign policy has been through an expansion of overseas aid. Turkey's total official development assistance (ODA) in 2013 was approximately US\$3.3 billion – a huge increase on the 1999 figure of US\$120 million.<sup>7</sup> In 2013 Turkey was the world's third largest bilateral donor of

humanitarian assistance and, as a percentage of Gross National Income, the world's most generous.<sup>8</sup> ODA is being distributed to a wider number of countries than ever before. While this is an outcome of Ankara's stated commitment to international development, aid has also expanded in parallel with efforts to widen Turkey's diplomatic and economic ties overseas.

**“As part of its policy of utilizing a wide range of soft power instruments such as assuming a mediator role in regional conflicts, Turkey also boosted its ODA to various countries affected by conflicts and other sources of instability.”**

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs





In a Turkish port, workers for Turkish NGO IHH load donated flour on to a boat bound for Somalia at the height of the famine in August 2011. © IHH HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOUNDATION

Aid has been an important tool for the Turkish government as part of its approach to conflict-affected states. For example, aid has been a component of Turkey's response to the fall out of the Arab Uprising, with Egypt, Tunisia and Libya all having been significant recipients. Conflict-affected states – including Palestine, Iraq, Georgia and most notably Afghanistan – have also been sent large aid packages in recent years. However, ODA has recently been focused much closer to home: the highest proportion and increase of aid in 2013 was spent on Syria, mostly in the form of assistance to refugees.<sup>11</sup>

The vast majority of Turkey's official aid is transferred through bilateral channels. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) distributes its own aid budget but is also tasked with

coordinating a host of other government ministries and public agencies which distribute aid. Emergency relief is primarily provided through the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency, as well as through the Turkish Red Crescent, 'Kizilay'. The pace at which Turkish aid programmes have expanded over the last decade or so has often exceeded the capacity of existing institutions to manage them. Furthermore, the number of government agencies involved has complicated the provision of development aid, which has tended to be driven by ad-hoc requests rather than longer-term country strategies.<sup>12</sup> As such, the Turkish government is currently drafting a new aid law and aid strategy.

The growth of the Turkish government's overseas aid, in terms of both size and number of recipients, has been mirrored

in the Turkish NGO sector. Today an array of faith- and rights-based organisations and professional associations are active in both national and international arenas. Assistance from Turkish NGOs amounted to US\$280.2 million in 2013, an increase from US\$56.7 million in 2005.<sup>13</sup> This growth has been underpinned by a changed legal environment and an expanding middle class with disposable income to donate. Many NGOs emerged in response to domestic challenges, such as the 1999 Marmara earthquake, but have subsequently started operating overseas. With established funding bases, many will continue to play a visible role overseas. How explicitly they tie themselves to the government's approach will be dependent on political dynamics at home.

# INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

While there is little doubt that diplomatic and military interventions have played a major role, aid has also been an important feature of international engagement on conflict dynamics in Somalia. Huge sums were transferred to the country after its independence and throughout the Cold War. Somalia became the largest recipient of aid in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> None of this aid prevented the country's collapse into civil war and 30,000 United Nations (UN) peacekeepers were required to protect the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid in response to Somalia's 1992 famine.<sup>15</sup>

After a decline of aid in the 1990s, Western donors backed the Transitional Federal Government (TFG)'s establishment with increased assistance to the country amid concerns over the threat from so-called 'failed states'. Humanitarian aid also increased as conflict intensified between 2005 and 2009, by which time more than one third of Somalis required urgent assistance.<sup>16</sup> Facing its most serious famine in two decades, in 2011 Somalia was the second largest recipient of humanitarian aid in the world.<sup>17</sup> Insecurity and threats from armed Islamist groups restricted access for aid agencies to many parts of the country and limited the presence of foreign nationals on the ground. While al Shabaab's retreat from Mogadishu provided some access to the thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled there, many aid agencies relied on a model of remote management, with activities often implemented through or in partnership with Somali NGOs or contractors.<sup>18</sup> The famine was declared over by early 2012 but many in Somalia continue to depend on aid today – with some agencies and the UN's humanitarian coordinator warning of the potential for a repeat of the crisis.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to humanitarian relief, there has been a substantial investment of aid in development projects. Some of this aid has been explicitly focused on peacebuilding initiatives. A significant amount of funding – though not all technically defined as aid – has been spent on peacekeepers and government forces. Since 2004, aid has also been

directed at strengthening the state. Between 2009 and 2012, at least US\$57.8 million was channelled directly to the Federal Government, though this is likely to exclude significant amounts of undeclared financing from some donors.<sup>20</sup> Aid has also been spent on technical assistance and capacity building. The results of aid for statebuilding have, however, been limited.<sup>21</sup> In 2013, a 'New Deal' to coordinate development, peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts in the country was endorsed, with US\$2.4 billion of aid committed by international donors for its implementation.<sup>22</sup> Whether this initiative manages to be as transformative as its supporters hope is yet to be proved.<sup>23</sup>

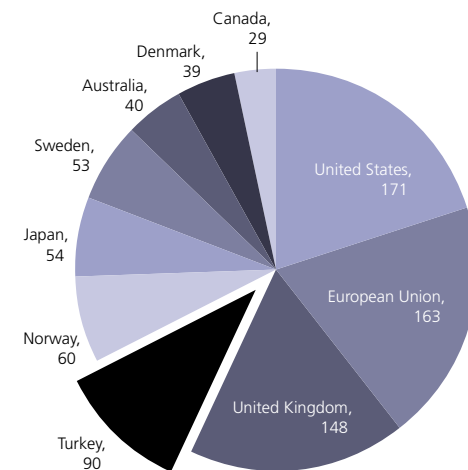


Figure 3: Top Ten Donors of gross ODA (2011–12 average), US\$ million<sup>24</sup>

## SOMALIA'S CONFLICT

Somalia has been a theatre of conflict since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. Clan conferences held in the 1990s led to relative stability in the self-declared independent but internationally unrecognised state of Somaliland and, to a lesser extent, the autonomous region of Puntland. Peace has been more elusive in South Central Somalia. A Transitional Federal Government (TFG), established in 2004 and backed by troops from the African Union (AU) and neighbouring countries struggled in a conflict with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) movement, which by 2006 had taken control of Mogadishu. Despite the absorption of some ICU leaders into the TFG following a peace agreement in 2009, al Shabaab, which emerged from the ICU's youth wing, continued to violently oppose the government. It emerged as the main opposition to the government and came to control large areas of territory.

Alongside the retreat of al Shabaab from Mogadishu and territorial gains by the government and AU forces in 2011, the ending of the government's transitional period and the election of a new leadership brought renewed optimism to Somalia in 2012. Many felt the country had turned a corner. However, widespread domestic and international support for the government has waned as it has struggled to manage the problems it has inherited. Al Shabaab has proved able to launch asymmetric attacks, maintain territory and remains a security threat, despite the killing of its leader in a September 2014 US airstrike. Continuing to rely on a contested system of proportional clan representation, the government has struggled to make progress in reconciling clans so as to provide a basis for a sustainable political settlement between them. The mandate of the current government expires in 2016, when elections are scheduled to take place and the constitution is yet to be fully agreed; disputes within its leadership and allegations of continued corruption appear to be obstructing political progress. Disputes surrounding the process of federalism and the negotiation and recognition of regional state authorities in recovered territories in South Central have created a serious risk of renewed clan conflict. Finally, the continued strength of clan militias poses a major challenge to the creation of state-controlled security and police forces. For the foreseeable short-term future, and even with the ousting of al Shabaab from the territory it controls, these issues will prove serious obstacles for Somalia as it moves down the path of peace and stability.

# AID AND CONFLICT

There is little doubt that humanitarian aid has saved countless lives in Somalia, that many development projects have improved livelihoods and that some institution-building efforts have been successful, especially at the local level.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, while aid does not cause conflict, experience shows “that even when it is effective in doing what it is intended to do to save lives or promote development, aid too often also feeds into, reinforces and prolongs conflict”.<sup>26</sup>

The United Nations Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (UN SEMG) has in the past reported the diversion of aid from its arrival in Mogadishu port through to its final distribution, especially by a cartel of Somali aid contractors.<sup>27</sup> Profits from this diversion, along with the aid itself, may in some cases have gone to armed groups, fuelling the war economy. Furthermore, aid is big business, with transportation contracts for one UN aid agency reportedly representing one of the single largest sources of revenue in 2010.<sup>28</sup> This has risked creating powerful vested interests in the continuation of the status quo.<sup>29</sup> In Mogadishu, ‘gatekeepers’, often affiliated to clan militias and powerful local officials, controlled IDP settlements and used them as pawns during the 2011 famine, charging aid agencies for access while often diverting what they provided.<sup>30</sup>

Aid has also been forcefully diverted through looting, illegal checkpoints and extortion by armed groups.<sup>31</sup> This has risked providing material support for fighting. In the territories it controls, al Shabaab has charged agencies with registration fees, travel permits and taxes while forcing them to hire selected individuals and directing where aid could be delivered, sometimes distributing it themselves or through their proxies.<sup>32</sup> It has banned agencies that have refused to comply with its regulations. While this is the most discussed case, the reality is that agencies have been forced to negotiate the distribution of much needed aid with conflict actors across the country, whether militias, regional authorities or representatives of the internationally recognised government. Without the



Insecurity and corruption remains an ongoing challenge for the delivery of aid, which Turkish NGOs have sought to overcome through direct aid delivery using Turkish volunteers and monitoring of distribution to final beneficiaries when possible.  
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appropriate safeguards, such aid is at risk of being manipulated for military or strategic purposes while legitimising and further entrenching power dynamics.

**“The aid system is pretty rotten as a whole. The majority of organizations are part and parcel of local power structures. This has implications for conflict with regards to who has control over the aid tap, who receives assistance and who doesn’t.”**

Researcher, Nairobi

Competition over the control of aid and the benefits of its distribution is bound up with conflict dynamics at all levels in Somalia. Nowhere has this played out more intensely than with regards to competition over control of the state.<sup>33</sup> Governments that have appeared on paper to represent national unity in Somalia have often in reality represented coalitions of clan factions.<sup>34</sup> In addition to having access to aid resources intended for government revenues, those in power also have significant influence over where and to whom donor aid is distributed. Observers argue that aid captured through control of the state has become part of a system of patronage politics along clan lines and/or used for private benefit.<sup>35</sup> It appears that these problems have proved difficult to bring under control despite the arrival of a new administration in 2012. Although contested, the UN SEMG

went as far as to allege in 2013 that a significant proportion of withdrawals from the central bank were used for private purposes rather than the running of the government.<sup>36</sup> It should also be noted that, as well as being seen as a catchment point for aid, the central state is remembered from the past as a tool of oppression. As such, statebuilding efforts to strengthen it or widen the reach of the state are not perceived to be apolitical.

Somali stakeholders point to numerous examples of how aid can help promote peace, for example by bringing fighting communities together or catalysing employment for young men who might otherwise join armed groups.<sup>37</sup> While Somali actors hold primary responsibility for maximising its benefits, the impact of aid on conflict dynamics is shaped by the way in which it is delivered by donors. Most of Somalia’s long-term donors are aware of the risks. Monitoring and risk management systems have been established, while the ‘do no harm’ principles and conflict-sensitive approaches are understood to be important.<sup>38</sup> There is, of course, room for improvement: aid continues to be diverted, implementation of the do no harm principles is patchy and donors admit they still have much to learn about conflict sensitivity. Meanwhile, past lessons associated with statebuilding appear hard to translate into policy, with past practices being repeated today.<sup>39</sup>

# TURKEY-SOMALIA RELATIONS

In August 2011, at the height of Somalia's famine, then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited and toured Mogadishu, the first leader outside of Africa to do so in nearly two decades. He brought with him a 200 person delegation, including members of his cabinet, humanitarians, cultural envoys, businessmen, and his family. As well as seeking to challenge the idea that Somalia was a 'no-go area', during the trip the Prime Minister committed to increasing aid and opening an embassy in Mogadishu, the first for a non-African country since the early 1990s.

Several factors underpin Turkey's recent engagement in Somalia. One is the humanitarian and moral impulse of assisting a people in crisis, with its then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stating in 2013 that "Turkey's approach to the Somali crisis is one of the visible examples of Turkey's human-oriented foreign policy".<sup>40</sup> Turkey's civil society has, in some regards, spearheaded the humanitarian engagement.<sup>41</sup> During the period of Ramadan in 2011, Turkish NGOs and celebrities launched a huge campaign to raise public awareness of Somalia's famine. With the success of this public campaign in mind, responding to the views of the electorate can also be considered a factor driving the government's engagement.<sup>42</sup> However, overall, efforts to directly promote stability in countries such as Somalia reflect the role that foreign policymakers have sought to create for Turkey. In these ways, Somalia is another case for Ankara to show that, concomitant with its rise as a global actor, it is contributing to addressing shared international challenges in its wider region.<sup>43</sup> Finally, Turkey's engagement in Somalia should be seen in the context of efforts to deepen relations in Africa, which intensified in 2005. Somalia sits at the centre of Ankara's Africa policy, acting as a bridge to deeper engagement elsewhere on the continent.<sup>44</sup>

Turkey provided some aid to Somalia in the 1980s, and one major Turkish NGO, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), has been engaged in the country since 1997. Nonetheless, Turkey's current

engagement can be traced back to 2007, when its Prime Minister first offered assistance to Somalia's leadership. Turkey was involved in subsequent peace processes and donor conferences, holding the Istanbul I conference in 2010 with the UN. In May 2012, Turkey hosted the Istanbul II conference which focused on Somalia's post-transition future and brought together key regional and international actors, Somali political groupings and over 300 civil society representatives. Indeed, pushing Somalia higher up on the international agenda is a stated objective for Turkey. In a 2011 speech to the UN General Assembly dedicated to the country, Turkey's then-Prime Minister argued that "no one can speak of peace, justice and civilisation in the world if the outcry rising from Somalia is left unheard".<sup>45</sup>

Managed through frequent high-level official delegations and the day-to-day activities of its embassy, Turkey's diplomatic relations with Somalia have primarily focused on Federal Government authorities in Mogadishu. A number of factors explain relatively low engagement with Somaliland and regional authorities in Puntland, including a strong political aversion to being seen as supporting the break-up of the country and the fact that attention was first focused on the humanitarian crisis in the south. However, Turkey will soon follow other

countries in establishing a consulate in Hargeisa.

Turkish soft power has underpinned its engagement in Somalia. Seen as a prosperous and democratic majority-Muslim country with historical links to Somalia, Turkey is perceived by Somalis as distinct from traditional international partners. The direct and very visible engagement by Turkish officials and aid workers on the ground has reinforced its positive image along with the visit of the Prime Minister, the opening of an embassy and the establishment of direct flights between Mogadishu and Turkey.

Not everyone has welcomed Turkey. Al Shabaab has attacked Turkish aid convoys and in October 2011 it killed 70 people in a bomb attack targeting students collecting scholarships to study in Turkey.<sup>46</sup> In July 2013 the group directly attacked Turkish officials, stating afterwards that Turkey was part of a group of nations bolstering the Federal Government and preventing the establishment of Islamic Sharia.<sup>47</sup> In January 2015 al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack targeting a hotel where Turkish officials were preparing for President Erdoğan's imminent second trip to Mogadishu.<sup>48</sup> While cognisant of the importance of clan-based conflict dynamics in Somalia, the conflict with al Shabaab is seen as the most significant factor holding Somalia back in the eyes



Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (centre left), former President of the Somali Republic, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (centre right), President of Turkey, listen to their nations' national anthems shortly after Mr. Erdoğan's arrival at Aden Abdulle International Airport, Mogadishu, for an official visit to Somalia. © UN PHOTO/STUART PRICE



IHH Humanitarian Relief's Somali-Kenyan Camp, August 2011. © IHH HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

with the UN arms embargo on Somalia.<sup>58</sup> Indeed one of the greatest risks regarding the diversion of assistance to Somalia from other donors has historically been related to security assistance.<sup>59</sup>

Turkish officials have also actively sought to deepen economic and commercial ties.<sup>60</sup> Turkish business associations have launched several initiatives with their Somali counterparts. These efforts appear to have paid off: Turkish exports to Somalia have increased from US\$8.5 million in 2008 to nearly US\$44 million in 2012.<sup>61</sup> Given that Turkish officials and civil society are already operating on the ground, businessmen are eager to follow in their steps and “penetrate the Somali market and play a lead role in reconstruction and economic development”.<sup>62</sup> Some are already involved in the construction sector. Turkish companies have been awarded contracts to manage Mogadishu’s airport and seaport, though these deals have been met with significant political opposition within Somalia.<sup>63</sup>

Ankara’s engagement in Somalia has largely followed a unilateral approach. However, Turkish officials openly recognise that Turkey is limited in what it alone can accomplish in Somalia.<sup>64</sup> They acknowledge the role of regional actors; for example Turkey and Kenya agreed to a security pact for Somalia in mid-2014.<sup>65</sup> Aside from its participation in multilateral forums, Turkey has joined the informal international contact group on Somalia, and is the donor co-chair with the United States in the New Deal working group on security.

of Turkish officials.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, they acknowledge that al Shabaab is seen as a legitimate political and social actor in the eyes of some Somalis and stress that this should not be overlooked.<sup>50</sup> Sceptical of the utility of foreign and regional military interventions, Turkish diplomats argue that solutions lie in a strengthened Somali military alongside constructive dialogue with individual al Shabaab fighters to encourage their social reintegration. More broadly, they argue that the state must be able to provide public services in order to build its legitimacy while starting to implement a federalised system of governance.<sup>51</sup>

Mediation has been one aspect of Turkey’s engagement on conflict issues. The extent to which the Turkish government has sought to hold or facilitate talks with al Shabaab is unclear, though it is acknowledged that some efforts were made in the past which did not proceed.<sup>52</sup> Aside from engaging with the group for humanitarian access, one Turkish NGO reportedly tried to mediate on conflict issues with al Shabaab, though the initiative was cut short by the Federal Government.<sup>53</sup> The main focus of Turkey’s mediation efforts have been on facilitating

talks between the Mogadishu-based Federal Government and authorities from Somaliland. Despite positive statements and agreements made between both parties, tangible outcomes have so far been limited. Turkish diplomats make very clear that their only aim is to support reconciliation and confidence building so that relations may be normalised. They have also noted their interest in encouraging dialogue between Mogadishu and emerging regional state authorities in South Central Somalia.<sup>54</sup>

While providing some financial support for African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Turkey has mainly focused on the Somali Federal Government’s own security forces with both training and funding.<sup>55</sup> In 2013, a three-year plan for security was agreed between Mogadishu and Ankara and in early 2015 the Turkish and Somali militaries signed a new agreement for cooperation.<sup>56</sup> Somali police have also been trained in Turkey on a regular basis since 2012 and there are plans for this training to take place in Mogadishu.<sup>57</sup> Turkey’s support for the security sector has not been without controversy, with some concerns about duplication of efforts and compliance



# TURKEY'S AID TO SOMALIA

Prior to 2011, Turkey's aid activities in Somalia were minimal. The famine of that year marked an unprecedented moment in Turkish aid history, representing a mobilisation of public donations and coordination of activities between civil society and the state on a scale not seen before. Private sector donations from Turkey in 2011 reportedly came to US\$57 million, while the state donated US\$94 million.<sup>66</sup> Around 500 Turkish nationals arrived in the country from August 2011 to deliver much of this aid.<sup>67</sup>

Aid to Somalia has by no means been a one-off response to a single crisis: In 2012, it was the fifth largest recipient of total official aid, valued at US\$86.6 million.<sup>68</sup> This rose to US\$116 million in 2013.<sup>69</sup> It remained the number one recipient of Turkish NGO assistance in 2012, with US\$26.41 million provided, which then increased to US\$36.1 million in 2013.<sup>70</sup> In January 2015 President Erdoğan returned for the first time since 2011 to Somalia, where a series of new development projects were agreed between the Turkish and Somali governments. Reflecting on the efforts of both Turkish officials and NGOs, Erdoğan stated that "we have come this far thanks to their devoted efforts, sacrifices and service ... Seeing that our promises are being fulfilled and results have begun to emerge further pleased us. The developments since our last visit give us hope for the future".<sup>71</sup>

## OFFICIAL ASSISTANCE

Originally focused on the coordination and provision of humanitarian aid, which was largely channelled through Kizilay's operations, the Turkish government gradually diverted its focus to development projects as the famine started to ease. Specific projects in Somalia have been identified through scoping missions, direct consultation with the Federal Government and other official actors, and engagement in multilateral forums. TIKA spends its own budget and coordinates projects supported by a range of Turkish government agencies, including the health, education and religious ministries, Turkey's airports and water authorities

and Istanbul's municipal government. These projects are mostly implemented in partnership with Somalia's Federal Government ministries, local authorities and in some cases with Somali NGOs. Somali and Turkish contractors have also been used. To date, Turkey's official aid projects have been implemented largely in Mogadishu. With the opening of TIKA offices in Garowe and Hargeisa in 2014, the geographic distribution of aid is expected to change.

Officials admit that Turkish aid agencies have tended to act first and then organise procedures afterwards while some analysts suggest that the delivery of ODA in Somalia has not always been guided by a coherent or detailed strategy.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, officials claim that Turkey's approach is unique and that "our aim is to show a different model can work in getting help to the people".<sup>73</sup> One argument is that Turkey has been more willing than traditional donors to focus aid on development projects despite ongoing instability: "the West is waiting for Somalia to be stable to invest in. But Turkey is investing in stability."<sup>74</sup> Based on a needs assessment made by a delegation of Turkish officials in 2011, aid for the development of physical infrastructure is considered to be a high priority, with resources for example being spent in Mogadishu on road construction, the renovation of the airport and the US\$35 million reconstruction of the Digfeer hospital, which will be jointly funded and managed.<sup>75</sup> In 2015, Turkey committed to building 10,000 houses for low-income groups in Mogadishu.<sup>76</sup> One of TIKA's largest development projects – and one of the few to be implemented in Somaliland as well as in Puntland and South Central Somalia – has been focused on water infrastructure. Support has also been provided in the health sector, through the deployment of health workers and the running of clinics, and in the education sector through significant numbers of scholarships to study at Turkish universities and small amounts of aid to universities and schools within Mogadishu.<sup>77</sup> Capacity-building initiatives have also been

supported through agricultural or fishing training centres.

With personnel stationed in Mogadishu since 2011, one characteristic of official assistance from Turkey is the preference for directly delivering aid bilaterally to Somalia. This is perceived by officials to be more effective and a way to encourage strong interpersonal relations with key Somali leaders and officials.<sup>78</sup> In common with other donors, Turkey has sought to encourage Somali ownership over development in the country through giving authorities a role in managing aid flows and seeking their approval of all programmes.<sup>79</sup> Statebuilding, in particular building the capacity of government institutions and services, is seen as crucial to promoting ownership, strengthening the legitimacy of the state and making Somalia self-sufficient.<sup>80</sup> Capacity building has been supported through the deployment of Turkish experts to the Federal Government. For example, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is supporting its counterpart while the Turkish Central Bank will reportedly help train staff at the Somali Central Bank in the future.<sup>81</sup> Local municipal authorities from Mogadishu have also attended training sessions in Turkey. Direct budget support has been another tool: between June and December 2013, the Federal Government was provided with US\$4.5 million in cash aid every month from the Turkish government. According to Turkish officials, this support met critical shortfalls in funding for salaries of Somali public servants and security forces. The Turkish government confirmed in 2014 that it would continue to provide cash aid to the Federal Government.<sup>82</sup>

As noted, Turkey's government has aimed to complement its support for development in Somalia by encouraging Turkish trade, investment and commercial activity in the country.<sup>83</sup> Turkish companies have won contracts for some of the infrastructure projects supported by Turkish aid. In line with moves in this direction by a range of traditional and emerging donors, such an approach is seen to be to the mutual benefit of both countries. As one Turkish diplomat argues, "the best

aid is trade.”<sup>84</sup> In these ways, officials see the role of business actors as being part of the government’s unique multi-track approach to Somalia.

## TURKISH NGOS

A wide variety of NGOs are delivering aid in Somalia. Kizilay, which delivered some US\$60 million of relief aid in 2011, is a major actor. Other significant aid providers include groups such as IHH, Deniz Feneri, Yardım Eli, Yeryüzü Doktorları, and Kimse Yok Mu, one of Turkey’s largest NGOs. Smaller aid associations, such as the Aegean International Health Federation (ESAFED), are also present in Somalia.<sup>85</sup>

Turkish NGOs deliver aid in a range of sectors, much of it focused on Mogadishu. As noted, Kizilay is active in the delivery of humanitarian aid, running the 25,000-person Jazira IDP camp in the city.<sup>86</sup> During the famine period other Turkish NGOs provided a significant amount of the aid in the Jazira camp, though they also worked in other IDP settlements in Mogadishu. As with official aid, the focus of NGOs has subsequently expanded to development projects. Turkish NGOs such as IHH, Yardım Eli and Yeryüzü Doktorları all support direct health services such as cataract operations and health clinics. The health sector has also been supported through training initiatives for Somali health workers, sometimes in partnership with official Turkish agencies. The education sector has also been a destination for a range of NGO projects. For example, Kimse Yok Mu has earmarked roughly US\$7 million for Somali students to study in Turkey until 2022 while in 2013 IHH opened one of Somalia’s biggest schools in Mogadishu.<sup>87</sup> Turkish NGOs also support physical infrastructure, for example financing the construction of three hospitals in Mogadishu or building wells and irrigation systems in and beyond Mogadishu. Turkish NGOs also distribute significant amounts of charitable donations, especially during Ramadan and Eid.<sup>88</sup>

Given the significant variation in their size, histories and mandates, it is difficult to define clear commonalities

in approaches to the delivery of aid by Turkish NGOs. Nonetheless, several factors are worth noting. One is that many Turkish NGOs have adopted what they call a ‘direct aid’ approach, meaning that it is Turkish aid agencies, manned by Turkish staff, who directly oversee the management of aid distribution on the ground, from its arrival in Somalia to its delivery to final beneficiaries. This is seen as a means of ensuring that their aid reaches beneficiaries as well as building strong relations with Somali people. A notable aspect of this direct aid approach is the reliance of several Turkish NGOs on rotations of Turkish volunteers to support the delivery of these services.<sup>89</sup>

The direct aid approach is not uniform.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Turkish NGOs have worked with local partners to deliver relief aid to otherwise inaccessible areas and, in ad-hoc cases, local partners have been used to implement development projects in areas where Turkish NGOs do not have a permanent presence. Due to a perceived deterioration of security for Turkish nationals in Somalia, the number of Turkish organisations working through local partners has increased and they have also started to rely on national staff members to implement programmes. With this, some NGOs have begun to focus on capacity building programs to support local initiatives and skills. This has been highlighted by NGOs as one way of ending aid dependency and promoting sustainability.

Many NGOs coordinate with Somali authorities in the delivery of aid. For example, one explained that when his NGO first arrived in Somalia in 2011, “we connected with the President of Somalia first; he told us who to engage with”, leading to a relationship with figures in the Ministry of Health who advised them on the location of development projects.<sup>91</sup> Others have had similar experiences and, at the very least, most NGOs appear to seek official Somali approval from relevant ministries.

Turkish NGOs have varying approaches to assessment processes, including consultation with Somali partners and stakeholders or, in the case of some,

relying on Turkish volunteers already on the ground. Some NGOs send monitoring teams to visit the country. Aside from Kizilay, most NGOs are largely dependent on public donations in Turkey. Public fundraising is often done for earmarked projects, reducing the flexibility to respond to changing needs. Turkish NGOs have also indicated that as attention has turned to Syria, public donations for projects in Somalia have started to decrease.

Turkish NGOs are also seen as a central component of the multi-track approach, one side of a triangle of cooperation that includes state and business actors.<sup>92</sup> Many of those working for NGOs share this sentiment, arguing that their role is perceived by Somalis as part of a wider package of Turkish assistance to the country. As noted, coordination between government agencies and civil society was at its zenith in 2011. Nonetheless, and despite some instances of joint projects, it is generally felt that the multi-track approach has not met expectations.<sup>93</sup>

# A WARM RESPONSE

**“Generation after generation will remember what Turkey has done.”**

Somali politician, Garowe

There is little doubt that aid from Turkey has been enthusiastically received by many Somali officials and members of civil society in areas where it is delivered, and requested by those in regions where it is not. Distinct from Somalia's traditional partners, Turkey's identity and soft power partially explains this.<sup>94</sup> Nonetheless, in explaining the popularity of Turkish aid, the 'how' matters just as much as the 'who'.

**“The Turkish are more transparent, because they are directly themselves implementing aid projects, like school rehabilitation, roads construction and food distribution.”**

Somali politician, Mogadishu

Several commonly held perspectives on why Turkish aid has been popular are worth noting. The quality and scale of Turkey's initial humanitarian response has been the focus of considerable praise. Subsequent development projects implemented in the face of ongoing instability,

especially in the infrastructure sector, are perceived by many to be of high quality as well as “tangible and practical, aid that a common person can see”.<sup>95</sup> Some of those interviewed believe that Turkish aid agencies “don't hire as much as they could” and question whether Turkey's approach risks undermining the creation of local capacities.<sup>96</sup> However, it is also believed by many Somali stakeholders that, because it is directly delivered on the ground by Turkish staff, a larger proportion of Turkish aid reaches final beneficiaries than aid from traditional donors.<sup>97</sup> Ahead of President Erdoğan's second visit to Mogadishu in January 2015, his counterpart, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, summarised the official response to Turkey's aid:

*“Turkey has shown the way in developing a holistic, on-the-ground partnership with Somalia that has supported us in growing according to a nationally-led and owned agenda ... Turkey did not hold back, waiting for stability before it invested. Instead, it invested to achieve it. Where other international partners chose to plan their interventions from*

*elsewhere, Turkey put its people on the ground in Somalia to maximise the efficient use of their human and planning resources in support of their financial resources. Turkish aid workers delivered their aid directly to the beneficiaries, to maximise impact.”<sup>98</sup>*

In some regards, the 2011 approach of Turkish aid agencies reportedly “put Nairobi-based international organisations on the defensive after maintaining for two decades that Mogadishu was too unsafe”.<sup>99</sup> By 2012, alongside the election of a new government, glowing media reports, a surge of visiting foreign dignities and packed flights to Mogadishu, Turkey's presence in Somalia was part of a changed narrative on the country's future.

**“A Turkish doctor cycling down a Turkish-built road to work in a Turkish clinic was welcomed by Somalis because it was hugely important for hope. Somalis don't need people hiding.”**

Aid worker, Nairobi

Many international actors have, over the past twenty years, invested significant effort and resources into trying to deliver relief, development and stability to Somalia. But some observers contest that Turkey's approach is pioneering and “screams of pragmatism, of hope, of a country that dares to aim for development before the outcome of the political unrest is settled”.<sup>100</sup> Turkish politicians and officials themselves argue that aid from the country, both official and non-official, has contributed to development and improved security in Somalia, helping put the country on the path to recovery and long-term peace.<sup>101</sup> It is too early to fully determine whether Turkey's boldness has, as its government argues, contributed to increasing stability. Nonetheless, it is possible to highlight some risks that have arisen in the Somali context as well recommendations on opportunities for Turkish policymakers, officials and civil society involved in the distribution of aid to ensure it promotes peace.



A Somali health worker examines patients as part of a Kizilay health project. Both official and NGO aid agencies from Turkey have placed a significant focus on the health sector. © KIZILAY

# RISKS THAT AID FUELS CONFLICT

The interrelationship between Turkey's aid and conflict has been illustrated in multiple ways, including attacks on Turkish aid and aid workers in similar fashion to other aid organisations. In 2012 militiamen fired on a crowd in an apparent attempt to control IDPs receiving aid from Kizilay.<sup>102</sup> In another incident, TFG forces and district clan militias clashed in Mogadishu over a dispute related to a Turkish aid consignment.<sup>103</sup> As noted, armed Islamist groups have targeted Turkish projects, demonstrating that aid is not always perceived in neutral terms. This reality aside, the past and current experience of other international aid agencies in the extremely complex context of Somalia shows that aid has often inadvertently fuelled conflict. With this in mind, a number of risks for the Turkish government and Turkish NGOs can be identified:

## LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF CONFLICT DYNAMICS

One of the major initial challenges for aid agencies from Turkey was their limited knowledge and experience of Somalia's conflict dynamics, a fact that is acknowledged by Turkish officials and NGO workers.<sup>104</sup> Many first became involved in Somalia as part of the large-scale response to the 2011 famine. While not uniform, some aid agencies do not appear to have consulted with Somali stakeholders beyond authorities. One Somali working for an international NGO notes, "They did not consider a lot of things. For them it was just to reach people and support them."<sup>105</sup> A rush to provide assistance combined with a weak understanding of Somalia's conflict may have increased the risks of aid further fuelling the conflict.

**"We were not experienced enough in both our humanitarian and development aid; we did not have a strategy and we did not do good evaluations."**

Turkish aid worker, Istanbul

## DIVERSION

There are indications that in certain instances Turkish official and non-official aid has been diverted into the war economy, potentially to the benefit of conflict actors or those who profit from it. In some cases aid has simply been looted. In others Turkish aid actors have noted its diversion at the point of delivery, with food aid from NGOs, for example, being sold on in markets.<sup>106</sup>

**"During the last two years, business people intervened in the delivery of Turkish aid for their own interests. They always try to divert Turkish aid assistance to the market before reaching beneficiaries."**

Somali NGO worker, Mogadishu

## MANIPULATION

Turkish aid intended for IDPs in Mogadishu has allegedly been manipulated by gatekeepers, who for example destroyed IDPs' shelters to attract donations of Turkish tents that were then appropriated and sold.<sup>107</sup> While Turkish NGOs state that they did not directly pay for access to camps, they did in some cases have to employ individuals suggested by local authorities.<sup>108</sup> In circumstances where public authorities do not always coordinate services according to needs, such incidents potentially entrench the local power relations which emerge from but also sustain conflict dynamics. As with other aid agencies, Turkish NGOs have on occasion had to engage with armed Islamist groups and other military actors in order to get humanitarian access, leaving them open to the risk of being manipulated for strategic or military purposes.<sup>109</sup>

**"Somali politicians misled Turkish aid by naming relatives to work with them... We know young individuals enriched by the Turkish aid management!"**

Somali politician, Mogadishu



## CAPTURE BY POLITICAL ELITES

Some observers believe that some Turkish aid agencies became too closely associated with a specific elite within the top echelons of the Federal Government, especially in the early days of their operations in Somalia.<sup>110</sup> Adherence to principles such as national ownership, support for national capacities, and demand-based aid makes engagement with authorities an indispensable feature of aid delivery. However, while by no means uniform, political leaders and officials in Somalia are often perceived to represent factional clan interests rather than the country's citizens as a whole.<sup>111</sup> Although it is difficult to verify, in some instances their influence over Turkish aid may have meant that it has been channelled for private or political purposes, thereby likely fuelling patronage politics, altering power relations and generating political grievances based on perceptions of unfairness.<sup>112</sup>

**"So one minister comes and asks you to distribute to their clan ... So you need some services and you need to buy some local services. So another minister comes and asks you to buy the services from his company. So every single minister and every single politician or MP has their own business in Somalia."**

Turkish aid worker, Istanbul



A boat from Turkey arrives in Mogadishu in September 2011 carrying mobile health and kitchen equipment for use by Turkish aid agencies in response to Somalia's famine.  
© IHH HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

## CORRUPTION

It is political dynamics within Somalia that explain incidences of official corruption. However, corruption has arguably been fuelled and even sustained by aid. Although it was subsequently reformed, the Turkish government's flagship scholarship programme was allegedly affected by official-level corruption in the past.<sup>113</sup> While official cash aid to the Federal Government based in Mogadishu is welcomed by many, there are some apprehensions. Statements such as "the government itself is not accountable; nobody knows where the US\$4.5 million goes"<sup>114</sup> are illustrative of some of the concerns that need to be addressed. All Turkish aid actors are very aware of the challenges of corruption but point to the complex trade-offs at play. For example, some officials argue that withdrawing assistance is counterproductive as it is needed to catalyse change and support those trying to address the issue.

**"Spoon feeding cash won't help us; it just goes to a few individuals."**

Somali researcher, Garowe

## GEOGRAPHICAL CONCENTRATION OF AID IN MOGADISHU

Given the political and clan dynamics at play between Somalis, the concentration of both official and NGO aid to Mogadishu risks exacerbating tensions. This applies not only to Somaliland, but also to Puntland and regions within South Central Somalia.<sup>115</sup> The contested process of federalism and the creation of regional authorities will likely increase these risks. The imbalance of aid could undermine the Turkish government's image of independence, potentially weakening its ability to act as a mediator.<sup>116</sup> TIKA's intended re-balancing of assistance to other regions should prove very helpful in redressing these perceptions. Nonetheless, as the intense politicisation over control of Turkish aid to Puntland has demonstrated in the past, providing aid beyond Mogadishu may create its own set of further challenges that will demand the attention of TIKA officials.<sup>117</sup>

**"The Turkish do not understand how Somalia collapsed ... helping only Mogadishu will drive conflict."**

Focus group discussant, Hargeisa

**"There are great risks of continuing to only support Mogadishu. People's perceptions will see injustice and inequality ... The Somali government is based on clan conflict and a clan basis: There are clans in Mogadishu and clans in the region. This is why having a federal system is so important. If Turkey does not support such a system then there will be conflict between clans, within the government and with Turkey itself."**

Politician, Garowe

## COMMERCIAL TIES

With Turkish companies winning important Federal Government contracts in Somalia, some observers feel that the boundaries between Turkey's official aid and business could be more transparent.<sup>118</sup> Accurate or not, such perceptions have the potential to undermine Turkey's image. If they are not managed well, such perceptions could become one of the factors that might perpetuate a culture where the abuse of public office is normalised. Turkey's relatively advanced economic engagement in Somalia will set the tone for other governments and commercial actors hoping to follow in its footsteps.

## COORDINATION WITH OTHER DONORS

Both TIKA and Turkish NGOs stress that they face a number of obstacles to coordination with other aid donors, including the fact that many have been based in neighbouring Kenya. On the other hand, foreign NGOs and donor officials perceive that Turkish aid actors have been trying to 'go it alone' in Somalia. Whatever the reasons, low levels of coordination jeopardise the effectiveness of aid while reducing the chances for mutual learning, information sharing and joint risk reduction.

Two young boys carrying water walk down a road next to a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) near the town of Jowhar, Somalia.

© UN PHOTO/TOBIN JONES



## IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL AID TO SOMALIA

Many of the risks faced by Turkish aid agencies are common to all of Somalia's donors. Its traditional development partners could learn from Turkey's recent experience. But there is also a wider discussion to be had on approaches to aid. There are clear parallels between Turkey's approach and that of the majority of Somalia's traditional donors. For example, while generally more risk averse to providing direct budget support, many traditional donors have, like Turkey, placed state-building at the centre of their engagement. Like Turkey, traditional donors increasingly see a role for commercial relations in promoting development alongside the provision of aid.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, many traditional donors have provided aid to the country in

similar ways as Turkey in the past, for example delivering relief aid directly or supporting physical infrastructure projects. Although some of these approaches continue today, humanitarian and development policies among traditional donors have since shifted, for example through preferring to work through Somali actors or focusing more explicitly on issues related to good governance.

It is understandable why traditional donors have made these shifts over time. For example, it is questionable whether it should be outside donors that are perceived to be delivering aid to Somalia's people or whether infrastructure projects can drive sustainable development without more fundamental changes in governance. On the other

hand, traditional donors need to also be honest about the long-term impact their assistance has had in Somalia to date. They must confront the fact that many in the country have come to view the traditional 'aid industry' with a degree of cynicism. In contrast, Turkey's approach has been welcomed by many. As such, there is significant room for open discussion and genuine mutual learning between Turkey and other donors. Beyond this, however, there needs to be a frank assessment about the limits of aid in contexts such as Somalia and a focus on alternative approaches to promoting peace and enabling development as a means to preventing cycles of crisis.

# OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE RISK AND PROMOTE PEACE

**“[The Turkish] now have goodwill and a generous reputation. They need to capitalise on the momentum they have created but now provide more strategic support, adopt do no harm principles and understand the conflict better. They responded very quickly, but they now need to be more responsive and careful while being engaged with different political blocks.”**

Somali researcher, Garowe

The Turkish government explicitly views its aid as part of a wider effort to promote peace. Several Turkish NGOs are open to engaging on issues of conflict. While other NGOs might prefer to focus on charitable giving, they still acknowledge the links between their interventions and peace. Looking forward, Turkey’s positive reputation and on-the-ground presence in Somalia puts both its official and civil society aid agencies in a strong position to leverage aid to support longer-term peace or, at the very least, manage the risks that it might fuel conflict. A number of opportunities stand out under three broad areas:

## 1. MAKE AID CONFLICT SENSITIVE

**“[Others believe] that the humanitarian is humanitarian, diplomacy is diplomacy, peacebuilding is peacebuilding and that these are all separate issues ... [But] we believe that all of them need to be go together; they mustn’t be separate.”**

Turkish aid worker, Istanbul

### ADOPT CONFLICT-SENSITIVE APPROACHES

Conflict sensitivity requires three steps. First, aid agencies must deepen their understanding of conflict dynamics. Second, they must analyse how their aid will impact on these dynamics. Third, they need to take action to minimise risks and maximise opportunities to build peace. Both official and non-official Turkish aid agencies are well placed to implement these steps into their programming. Individuals who have remained on the ground for a significant period of time already demonstrate a strong understanding of conflict dynamics; the challenge is how to institutionalise this knowledge, share it widely and reinforce it with in-depth conflict analysis. Consultation with a wider set of stakeholders, already conducted by some aid actors, will be crucial. Furthermore, many Turkish aid agencies have already demonstrated their willingness to adjust programmes, for example altering how aid is distributed to IDPs. The opportunity is to now do this with better information on conflict dynamics in mind.

### FURTHER REDUCE DIVERSION

The direct delivery approach of many Turkish aid agencies in Somalia may have offered opportunities to reduce the risks of diversion into the war economy by removing the need for brokers, contractors and other middlemen, and by using staff on the ground to monitor final delivery to beneficiaries. However the reality is that some aid still appears to be diverted; greater attention needs to be paid to reducing diversion. Other aid agencies are currently trying to ensure that assistance reaches final beneficiaries despite using a model of remote management and/or partnership approaches in Somalia. As Turkish NGOs reduce their staff on the ground and increasingly work through Somali partners, engagement with these aid actors might create opportunities for mutual sharing of experiences and knowledge, and help both sides to improve their practices.

**“Ships are coming to Mogadishu port; they are unshipping their load and going: ‘We helped Somalia’. Well do you know where that aid goes? And later you see that aid is being sold in markets. That’s why [we] organize and distribute our aid directly ourselves.”**

Turkish aid worker, Istanbul

### BRING A PEACEBUILDING LENS TO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Development projects that Turkish aid actors are currently supporting, whether in the infrastructure, health or education sectors, could be leveraged to support peacebuilding alongside development objectives. Social reconciliation processes could be indirectly supported, for example through education initiatives, while development projects could be used to bring together conflicting communities or provide economic peace dividends such as employment in areas emerging from conflict.<sup>120</sup> Several of the Turkish NGOs engaged in the education sector are already aware of the opportunities in this regard and could explore the possibilities through formally integrating it into strategies and practices.

### DIRECTLY SUPPORT PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

It appears that most Turkish aid actors are not yet running projects explicitly focused on peacebuilding as their primary objective. Opportunities exist for greater engagement on this area. For example, aid from either the Turkish government or from Turkish NGOs could directly support Somali civil society actors engaged in reconciliation processes.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, there are a range of Turkish actors, from both government and civil society, who have had experience of supporting peace and reconciliation processes in other conflict-affected countries and within Turkey itself whose capacity could be deployed to Somalia.

## 2. ENCOURAGE STATEBUILDING THAT WORKS FOR PEACE

**“When the donors – European, American or Turkish – bring their money, who will be accountable? Their aid will end up in the hands of the wrong people ... throughout society we have wrong people who are not acting in the interests of Somalis but in fact they are distributing aid to their own clan. A lack of accountability from donors on where this money ends up is also an issue, as is lack of accountability to Somali people. So we need accountability from the top and the bottom.”**

Focus group discussant, Garowe

### PUT ACCOUNTABLE, INCLUSIVE AND LEGITIMATE POLITICS AT THE HEART OF STATEBUILDING

Turkey’s soft power puts its government in a unique position to help drive progress in this direction. Aside from continuing to provide support for state capacity through training and the deployment of experts, cooperation on issues such as the rule of law or the finalisation of the provisional constitution presents opportunities for encouraging the development of a more accountable state that responds to the needs of citizens. Meanwhile, if planned elections take place in 2016, they will not create a legitimate political settlement on their own. Turkey must continue to expend diplomatic energy on encouraging Somalia’s leaders to work with one another before, during and after voting and emphasise the need for both social and political reconciliation as the foundation for sustainable statebuilding. Building on prior commitments, the Turkish government should encourage Somali authorities to engage more with civil society and citizens on matters of governance and peace as well as creating spaces and forums for this to happen. Turkish NGOs could directly assist Somali civil society groups to play more active roles in the process of statebuilding.



### TAKE A STAND ON CORRUPTION

The creation of alternative models of inclusive, accountable and legitimate governance will not be viable until the issue of corruption is met head on. Mechanisms for reducing corruption need to become part of the public services support package to Somalia. The Turkish government should support dialogues on how aid used for government finances can be more accountably managed (for example through joint oversight mechanisms) and consider suspending its own contributions until a working solution is agreed. The responsibility does not only lie with Somali actors: all Turkish aid agencies, official or not, need to ensure that they themselves are accountable and transparent to Somali citizens about where aid ends up.

### CAREFULLY SUPPORT EMERGING AUTHORITIES

One of the most contentious issues of statebuilding relates to the balance of power between the Federal Government and future federal state and regional authorities, and the formation of authorities themselves. Support for this dimension of statebuilding, including for example through capacity building for emerging authorities, could be a means for Turkey to assist with the establishment of administrations that are genuinely inclusive and participatory. Nonetheless, the primary objective of Turkish engagement in this area should be to ensure that sufficient time and space exists for Somali-led dialogue at all levels – the process must not be rushed by external actors.

### SUPPORT BOTTOM-UP STATEBUILDING

Long-term support for bottom-up processes of institution building in Somalia may prove productive investments. Overall, TIKA and Turkish NGOs should consider how they can actively support local governance structures, including at the community level, as part of the delivery of development projects. Both TIKA and NGOs could extend their experience of working with Mogadishu’s municipal authorities to other urban areas in the country.

### UTILISE EXISTING CAPACITY IN THE REGIONS AND SOMALILAND

As TIKA extends its reach into new locations where there exists substantial capacity, as is the case in Somaliland, it should avoid directly implementing projects but instead use the opportunity to support local structures where possible. Existing structures – such as the Puntland Development Plan – have been formed though largely participatory and inclusive processes and merit donor support. Meanwhile, some civil society organisations in historically more stable regions outside of Mogadishu have significant capacity to deliver projects, meaning that rather than potentially displacing them, Turkish NGOs could work alongside them.

**PHOTO ABOVE:** The Somaliland and Turkish flags painted on a wall in Hargeisa. While it has traditionally been more focused on Mogadishu, Turkey’s government has slowly increased aid delivery to Somaliland and established a TIKA presence in 2014. An official consulate may soon follow. © SAFERWORLD/THOMAS WHEELER



### 3. CONSTRUCT STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AROUND PEACE

**“We need to complement one another’s strengths and mitigate our weaknesses – this is what effective coordination means.”**

Aid worker, Nairobi

#### MAKE ECONOMIC INTERESTS TRANSPARENT AND ENCOURAGE CONFLICT-SENSITIVE BUSINESS PRACTICE

In general, many Somali stakeholders interviewed voiced support for an approach that leverages commercial actors in addition to aid agencies as means of catalysing development. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has argued that Turkey “has brought in business that changed the face of Mogadishu and encouraged its entrepreneurs to come to the city and transform state enterprises, including returning the port and the airport to profitability”.<sup>122</sup> Greater transparency over the difference between objectives of economic investments and aid projects would, nonetheless, help tackle misperceptions. Furthermore, the principles of conflict sensitivity should apply to Turkish commercial actors as well as aid agencies. To encourage this, the Turkish government should make commercial tenders conditional on contractors conducting meaningful risk assessments.

#### USE PEACE AS AN ENTRY POINT TO DEVELOP THE MULTI-TRACK APPROACH

While Turkish NGOs should be free to pursue independent initiatives, a stronger partnership between official and civil society actors could be catalysed and re-energised around the promotion of peace in a similar way that that it was created in response to the famine in 2011. Formal opportunities for discussion between different Turkish government agencies and NGOs should be created in both Mogadishu and Ankara. In the spirit of a true two-way partnership, Turkish civil society actors should have opportunities to shape the government’s strategy and ensure that it is reflective

of a wider set of perspectives beyond the state. A genuinely multi-track approach need not be exclusively Turkish: there are significant benefits to drawing Somali and other international state and non-state stakeholders into efforts to revive multi-track partnerships. For one, this would only widen the number of inputs that the Turkish government can draw on while also allowing it to share its own perspectives and priorities with a wider set of stakeholders.

#### ENGAGE WITH OTHER DONORS

While not the sole responsibility of Turkish officials or NGOs, the low level of engagement with other international aid donors needs to be addressed. The effectiveness of aid will be strengthened while risks will be reduced through

greater information sharing between all aid agencies working in Somalia. Some aspects of Turkey’s engagement differs from that of others, meaning that the potential for mutual strengths to be accentuated through coordination is significant. Furthermore, while both TIKA and Turkish NGOs can learn from donors who have been engaged in Somalia for a sustained period, others can also learn from Turkey’s approach to delivering aid – something many Somali stakeholders want them to do. There are clear opportunities for Turkey’s government to work with and through existing coordination structures, as it has already been doing to some extent with regards to the implementation of the New Deal. Nonetheless, based on its experience on the ground to date, it is also in a position to lead in the creation of future collective initiatives.

#### WHAT DOES TURKEY’S EXPERIENCE IN SOMALIA MEAN FOR ‘HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY’?

Turkey’s recent experience in Somalia could help enlighten and further develop the concept of humanitarian diplomacy. As one Turkish diplomat notes, “Turkey is learning, and it is learning fast.”<sup>123</sup> Four implications from the Somalia case stand out for policymakers:

- **Allow aid to work for peace:** There is a need for Turkey to create a much more explicit focus on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding within its emerging national aid strategy, with its aid agencies being given a mandate to integrate a focus on peace into their objectives and strategies. This will help to maximise the impact of its humanitarian and development assistance which is increasingly being focused on conflict-affected states.
- **Make aid coherent with other streams of engagement:** There is a need for the provision of development aid to be coherent with and closely tied to the other dimensions of the Turkish government’s broader engagement in conflict-affected states, including mediation efforts and its role in the security sector. This would be an important factor in strengthening its multi-sectorial approach.
- **Strengthen the multi-track approach:** Cultivating a two-way partnership of coordination and consultation with civil society actors through a shared focus on addressing conflict and insecurity could help make the multi-track approach an effective reality that maximises the use of Turkey’s civilian capacity.
- **Look beyond host states:** While establishing strong relationships with host governments, as Turkey has done in Somalia, the focus of engagement should also be on people and the views of a broader set of stakeholders, including civil society groups. In order to create more responsive governance systems over the long run, legitimacy, accountability and inclusiveness should be placed at the centre of support for statebuilding.

# CONCLUSION

Turkey's continued rise will be determined and shaped by unpredictable global and domestic factors. But it is likely that the country will remain a key player in its wider region and, because of this, a prominent actor in international relations. This role will play out in the conflict-affected states where Turkey's model of humanitarian diplomacy looks certain to remain focused under the current administration. Turkey's leaders have pointed to Somalia as a clear example of humanitarian diplomacy in action.<sup>124</sup> An array of Turkish state agencies and NGOs have played critical roles in the country's relationship with Somalia; their aid has arguably underpinned the legitimacy of Turkey's broader engagement in the country.

Turkey is certainly a popular country in Somalia. Its engagement is perceived by many to have changed the aid landscape. But the honeymoon period will not last forever and, for their part, Turkish aid agencies are starting to suffer from 'Somalia fatigue'.<sup>125</sup> To re-energise the relationship they will need to reassess their roles and keep improving how they engage. The transition away from emergency humanitarian relief to development projects and capacity building has been the main feature of both official and civil society's evolving engagement since the 2011 famine. Dynamics within Somalia will greatly shape how aid from Turkish actors evolves in the future: an improved political and security situation will create openings for continued

evolution in the same direction, while the outbreak of another crisis will force Turkish aid agencies to revert to past practice. More broadly, it needs to be remembered that Somali stakeholders are not passive recipients of aid but active agents shaping its delivery. As is the case with the country's future as a whole, it will be Somalia's leaders, officials and civil society that ultimately influence the impact of Turkish aid. Nonetheless, an explicit focus from Turkish aid agencies on making aid work for peace could represent the next progressive step in the evolution of Turkey-Somalia relations and, once again, demonstrate the rising power's ability to alter the aid landscape.

Somali men help build a road through the Turkish Red Crescent-run Jazira IDP camp in 2011. While Turkish NGOs have relied on Turkish volunteers to deliver aid, they have also employed local Somalis. Due to concerns about security, Turkish NGOs are increasingly working through or with Somali staff. © KIZILAY



## NOTES

- 1 Given the size of their populations and economies, China, Brazil and India are considered major rising powers. Turkey might join countries such as Indonesia, South Africa or Mexico as being considered middle-status rising powers. In reality, the criteria used to determine which countries qualify as rising powers are not always clear. However, some characteristics relevant to this study can be outlined. Due to their economic growth in recent decades and the effects of globalisation, rising powers play an important role on the world stage. They are fast becoming significant providers of aid, diplomatic support and security cooperation. They have a growing influence in international security and development debates – and they increasingly shape the views of other nations. Rising powers are engaged in conflict-affected states, and so have a vested interest in the stability of these countries. They are also expected by established powers to take on a share of the global responsibility for responding to international conflicts and crises.
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**About the research:** The research for this briefing, carried out by Saferworld and the Istanbul Policy Center in 2014, is based on a review of relevant reports and media sources. In addition, 52 key informant interviews with politicians, diplomats, aid agency officials, NGO staff, businessmen and civil society activists were held in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, Garowe, Ankara, Istanbul, Nairobi and London. Furthermore, over 60 individuals joined focus group discussions in Mogadishu, Hargeisa and Garowe as well as a validation workshop in Istanbul. The lead researchers were Onur Sazak, Thomas Wheeler and Auveen Woods.



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## NOTES continued

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