

American Foreign Policy Council

SOMALIA

QUICK FACTS

Population: 10,251,568

Area: 637,657 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Somali 85%,
Bantu and other non-Somali 15%
(including Arabs 30,000)

Religions: Sunni Muslim

Government Type: In the
process of building a federated
parliamentary republic

GDP (official exchange rate):
\$2.372 billion (2010 est.)



Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated April 2013)

The U.S. State Department's most recent report on global terrorism trends, while acknowledging the progress made by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and neighboring countries in degrading the capabilities of al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups, as well as liberating areas from al-Shabaab administration, nonetheless acknowledged that "foreign fighters and al-Shabaab members remained in many parts of south and central Somalia and continued to mount operations within Somalia and against neighboring countries." It also noted that al-Shabaab's continued control of large areas of territory provides "a permissive environment for al-Qaeda operatives to conduct training and terrorist planning with other sympathetic violent extremists, including foreign fighters."¹ One reason for the protracted conflict is the weakness of Somalia's internationally-recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG), whose authority is not widely accepted by Somalis. Hampering the U.S. response to this threat is not only the absence of a viable partner government in the Somali

*capital of Mogadishu, but also Washington's failure to creatively engage effective Somali authorities, including those in the unrecognized Republic of Somaliland.*²

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

The Islamist groups currently active in Somalia fall roughly into one of seven principal categories:

Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (“Movement of Warrior Youth,” *al-Shabaab*)

Known colloquially as al-Shabaab, this movement arose out of the militant wing of the Islamic Courts Union. Following the defeat of the latter by the Ethiopian intervention in early 2007, al-Shabaab broke with other Islamists who regrouped under the sponsorship of Eritrea to form the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) to oppose the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) then installed in Mogadishu.

Founded in large part due to the efforts of Aden Hashi Ayro, a militant who had trained with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001, al-Shabaab's schism with other Islamists reflects Ayro's adherence to a more radical *jihadist* ideology that does not countenance cooperation with the non-Muslim Eritrean regime, even against a common enemy. Although divided into several factions even before Ayro was killed by a U.S. aerial strike in May 2008, al-Shabaab was an effective fighting force overall. It managed to seize control of large sections of southern and central Somalia, including parts of Mogadishu, where it has installed a strict Islamist regime that, to the horror of many Somalis, has carried out a number of harsh punishments—among them the stoning of a 13-year-old rape victim that it found “guilty” of alleged adultery.³ The senior leadership of al-Shabaab has included veteran *jihadists* with experience on battlefields abroad, including in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kashmir.⁴

Over time, al-Shabaab's leadership split into two principal currents. The first, hard-line faction, consisting primarily of foreign or foreign-funded *jihadists*, follows a transnational *jihadist* agenda, evidenced by the twin bombings in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010 during the FIFA World Cup final match—an attack that left 74 people dead and scores injured. In February 2012, the leader of this faction, Ahmed Abdi Godane, a.k.a. Mukhtar Abu Zubair, proclaimed its formal allegiance to al-Qaeda and to Osama bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁵

The other al-Shabaab group, made up of clan-based militia leaders with a more “nationalist” agenda, emphasized expelling foreign forces from Soma-

lia and focusing on local control. At the very end of 2011, the latter group declared its intentions to rename the group the “Islamic Emirate of Somalia” and reject al-Qaeda branding and objectives, focusing primarily on Somalia’s domestic challenges.⁶

These internal divisions have diminished the group’s control over Somalia. Since Kenyan and Ethiopian troops joined African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Transitional Federal Government forces to expel Al-Shabaab from major cities beginning in late 2011, the group has surrendered its strongholds in multiple regional capitals, and defections of Al-Shabaab soldiers have increased in number. In December 2012, Godane admitted to major defeats while pledging to continue a guerrilla war against Somali and AMISOM forces.⁷

Hizbul Islam (“Islamic Party”)

Led by Hassan Dahir ‘Aweys, previously the military commander of Somali Muslim Brotherhood offshoot *al-Itihaad al-Islamiyya* (AIAI, the “Islamic Union”) and subsequently chairman of the *shura* of the Islamic Courts Union, Hizbul Islam is the product of a merger of several groups. Its primary difference with al-Shabaab is that Hizbul Islam does not place as much emphasis on global *jihadi* objectives; rather, its two principal demands are the implementation of a strict version of *sharia* as the law in Somalia, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country. Unlike the multi-clan contingency of al-Shabaab, Hizbul Islam draws its membership and support primarily from ‘Aweys’ Habar Gedir sub-clan.⁸ By and large, however, Hizbul Islam has cooperated with al-Shabaab, although the two groups have come into occasional conflict over the division of spoils. Hizbul Islam lost control of the strategic town of Beledweyne to al-Shabaab in June 2010, retaining only some territory in the southern and central Somali regions of Bay and Lower Shabelle. Subsequently, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the two groups cooperated on a joint offensive against TFG and AMISOM forces in Mogadishu. Reports of a merger between the two groups surfaced at the end of 2010,⁹ but in September 2012 a spokesperson from Hizbul Islam announced its split with al-Shabaab, citing ideological differences and the latter’s weakened position in the region.¹⁰

Hizbul Islam’s stance with respect to the Somali government is unclear. While ‘Aweys is reported to have declared war against the regime after Sheikh Hassan Mohamud was elected president in September 2012,¹¹ the group’s spokesman, Mohamed Moalim, was also quoted welcoming the new president and parliament as a “positive development.”¹²

Mu’askar Ras Kamboni (“Ras Kamboni Brigades”)

Founded by Hassan Abdullah Hersi (“al-Turki”), a former military commander for the Islamic Courts, the Ras Kamboni Brigades is based in Middle and Lower Jubba Valley, where it gained control of several strategically located towns which control access to the Kenyan border, including Jilib Afmadoow, and Dhoobley. The group was aligned with Hizbul Islam until late 2009, when al-Shabaab took control of the port of Kismayo. A faction of Ras Kamboni, led by al-Turki, announced it was joining forces with al-Shabaab and proclaimed its adhesion to “the international *jihad* of al-Qaeda” in early 2010.¹³

The rest of the Ras Kamboni Brigades follows Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Islam, a.k.a. Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, who served as the former governor of Kismayo from 2006 until the fall of the Islamic Courts Union.¹⁴ Rumored to have strong relations with the Kenyan government, the Madobe-led Ras Kamboni group played a key role in helping the AMISOM, Kenyan, and Somali government forces push al-Shabaab out of the town of Kismayo in October 2012, although some Mogadishu-based Somali government officials denied having cooperated with the “competing militants.”¹⁵ A spokesperson of the Somali government forces in Jubba reports that the group has since allied with Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) to fight for control the port city,¹⁶ leading to clashes with government troops in February 2013.¹⁷

Ahlu-Sunna wal-Jama’a (roughly, “[Followers of] the Traditions and Consensus [of the Prophet Muhammad]”)

The original Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama’a was an umbrella group of traditional Somali Muslims organized by General Muhammad Farah ‘Aideed as a counterweight to his Wahhabi-inspired opponents in AIAI.¹⁸ In mid-2009, the excesses of al-Shabaab led to a revival of the movement to oppose the ideology which Shabaab and other Islamist insurgents have appropriated from some of their foreign sponsors. Loosely organized into armed militias on a clan basis and with roots in the Sufi brotherhoods, Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama’a fighters in 2010 managed in a number of places to stop what had seemed to be the relentless surge of al-Shabaab forces. Trained and assisted by the defense forces of neighboring Ethiopia, which have allowed some of the movement’s units the use of its territory, Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama’a emerged as a force in southern and central Somalia. However, the group’s opposition to al-Shabaab should not be confused for support of the TFG. In fact, the group’s formal alliance with the TFG in 2010, brought about under tremendous pressure from regional and international actors, has largely fallen apart. In any event, while Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama’a has neither the international links nor global strategic vision of al-Shabaab, the group has an Islamist agenda of its own—for example, it has conducted operations against those who it felt

were not properly observing the fast of Ramadan—that may set it at odds with the more secular elements of Somali society.¹⁹

As of November 2012, the group maintains control over several towns and villages in Galgaduud and Hiran.²⁰ After assisting the Somali government to fight al-Shabaab for two years, in December 2012 Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama'a troops were officially integrated into the Somali government forces.²¹ In February 2013, the chairman of the executive committee of Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a, Sheikh Mohamed Yusuf Hefow, passed away in a hospital in Mogadishu.²²

Al-Islah al-Islamiyya (“Islamic Movement”)

In 2004, the US Department of State described al-Islah as an “organized Islamic group whose goal is the establishment of an Islamic state... a generally nonviolent movement that operates primarily in Mogadishu.”²³ Largely displaced during the period when the Islamic Courts Union was ascendant, al-Islah underwent something of a revival in Mogadishu since Sharif Ahmed returned to the head of the TFG in 2009. Its chief role was the administration of schools in the capital which were supported by the group’s foreign benefactors. It is not surprising, given how spectacularly state institutions have collapsed in Somalia, that “this naturally promoted fundamentalist trends (such as al-Islah) in local Islam, which had previously been largely Sufi in character, and these were encouraged by financial support from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern centers.”²⁴

Hassan Sheikh Mohamed, who was elected head of the Somali government in September 2012, has links with al-Islah.²⁵

Al-Qaeda

While its earlier foray into Somalia did not prove particularly successful, al-Qaeda remains interested in Somalia both as a theater of operations in itself and as a jumping-off point for terrorist activities in the nearby Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere in Africa.²⁶ An audio statement released by Osama bin Laden in 2009 praising the Islamist insurgency in Somalia and calling upon Muslims to support it underscores this reality.²⁷ Even analysts who previously discounted al-Qaeda’s involvement in Somalia now acknowledge that since at least early 2008, al-Qaeda advisors have played a critical role in al-Shabaab operations.²⁸ That fact was highlighted by the September 2009 strike inside Somalia by U.S. Special Operations Forces, which killed Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a Kenyan national wanted in connection with the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. At the time of his death, Nabhan was running terrorist training camps and bringing in foreign trainers and fighters to support al-Shabaab,

presumably at the behest of al-Qaeda. In February 2012, one faction of al-Shabaab announced a merger with the al-Qaeda.

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Somali identity is historically rooted in patrilineal descent (*abtirsinyo*, or the “reckoning of ancestors”), which determines each individual’s exact place in society. At the apices of this structure are the five “clan-families”: Darod, Dir, Hawiye, Isaq, and Digil/Rahanweyn (also known as Digil Mirifle). The first four are considered “noble clans,” while the agro-pastoral Digil/Rahanweyn occupy a second tier in Somali society. A third tier also exists in Somali social hierarchy, consisting of minority clans whose members historically carried out occupations such as metalworking and tanning, which, in the eyes of the nomadic “noble clans,” rendered them ritually unclean.²⁹

Traditionally, the Somali subscribe to Sunni Islam and follow the Shāfi‘ī school (*mahdab*) of jurisprudence which, although conservative, is open to a variety of liberal views regarding practice.³⁰ Up until the time of Somalia’s independence in 1960, although there were different movements within the Sunni Islam in Somalia, the most dominant were the Sufi brotherhoods (sing., *tariqa*, pl. *turuq*), especially that of the Qadiriyya order (although the Ahmadiyya order, introduced into Somali lands in the 19th century, was also influential).³¹ While traditional Islamic schools and scholars (*ulamā*) played a role as focal points for rudimentary political opposition to colonial rule in Italian Somalia, historically their role in the politics of the Somali clan structure was neither institutionalized nor particularly prominent. This was due, in part, to the fact that *sharia* historically was not especially entrenched in Somalia: being largely pastoralists, the Somali relied more on customary law (*xeer*) than on religious prescriptions.³² Hence, Somali Islamism is largely a post-colonial movement which became active in the late 1980s, and which was strengthened by the collapse of the state in 1991 and the ensuing civil war, international intervention, external meddling, and efforts by Somalis themselves at political reconstruction. Absent this chain of events, it is doubtful that militant Islamism would be much more than a marginal force in Somali politics.

Although its adherents often appeal to the early 20th century anti-colonial fight of the “Mad Mullah” Sayyid Muhammad ‘Abdille Hassan,³³ Somali Islamism is, at its origins, an import dating back at most to the 1950s. The 1953 establishment in Mogadishu of an Institute of Islamic Studies run by Egyptian scholars from Cairo’s al-Azhar University introduced both Arabic language curriculum and contact with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimoon*). As is well-known, unlike the Sufis who empha-

size socialization, moral education, and spiritual preparation, the Muslim Brothers stress organization, activism, and the socio-political dimension of change directed toward the creation of a modern Islamic state. After Somalia's independence in 1960, Egyptians opened secondary schools in many of the country's towns. In the 1960s and 1970s, Saudi religious and educational institutions—especially the Islamic University of Medina, the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca, and the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh—joined al-Azhar in offering scholarships to the graduates of these institutions. This development has parallels with the entrenchment of radical Islam in nearby Sudan via the establishment of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood, the precursor to the currently-ruling National Congress Party (formerly the National Islamic Front).

By the 1970s, the nascent Somali Muslim Brotherhood was so visible that the dictatorial regime of Siyad Barre took measures to suppress it, driving its adherents underground. The Somali Muslim Brothers eventually coalesced into two groups: *al-Islah al-Islamiyya* (“Islamic Movement”) founded in Saudi Arabia in 1978, and *al-Itihaad al-Islamiyya* (AIAI, the “Islamic Union”), established in the early 1980s. The memberships of the two and their leadership network overlapped considerably. The differences between them were, at least initially, largely a function of the circumstances of their clandestine origins. Both sought the creation of an expansive “Islamic Republic of Greater Somalia” and eventually a political union embracing all Muslims in the Horn of Africa.³⁴

The collapse in January 1991 of the Siyad Barre regime led to internecine warfare that laid waste to Somalia. Ironically, AIAI found itself in conflict with Muhammad Farah ‘Aideed, the warlord who would become America’s Somali *bête noire*, and, after being defeated by him, was forced to withdraw after heavy fighting. This withdrawal, which coincided with the fall of the Derg in neighboring Ethiopia, allowed the Somali Islamists to regroup in the Somali region of Ethiopia, where there were also large numbers of refugees from Somalia proper. After the evacuation of Mogadishu, AIAI tried to seize control of strategic assets like seaports and crossroads. Although it temporarily held the northern port of Bosaso and the eastern ports of Marka and Kismayo, the only area where it exercised long-term control was the economically vital intersection of Luuq, in southern Somalia, near the Ethiopian border, where it imposed harsh *sharia*-based rule from 1991 until 1996. From its base in Luuq, the Islamists of AIAI encouraged subversive activities among ethnic Somalis of Ethiopia and carried out a series of terrorist attacks, including the bombing of two hotels and the 1995 attempted assassination of an ethnic Somali Ethiopian cabinet minister, Abdul Majeed Hussein, in Addis Ababa. The exasperated Ethiopian regime finally intervened in Somalia in

August 1996, wiping out AIAI bases in Luuq and Buulo Haawa and killing hundreds of Somali extremists as well as scores of non-Somalis who had flocked to the Horn of Africa under the banner of *jihad*. From this period emerged the cooperation between Somali Islamists and Ethiopian groups like the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), which continue to struggle against the newly-established government of Ethiopia.

Ironically, beginning in 1993, international interventions in Somalia unwittingly allowed the Islamists back into areas that from which they had been ejected by 'Aideed, where they proceeded to thrive politically and commercially. Following the departure of the second United Nations mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II), Islamic authorities cropped up in response to problems of crime, *sharia* being a common denominator around which different communities could organize.

From its inception, AIAI rejected the non-confessional nature of the Somali state and sought to establish an Islamic regime in the country based on a strict Wahhabi interpretation of the Muslim faith. When, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Siyad Barre dictatorship, it found the direct road to power blocked by Muhammad Farah 'Aideed, it adopted a more subtle and seductive approach based on the establishment of economic and other social programs together with Islamic courts.³⁵

Islam has come to be seen by some Somalis as an alternative to both the traditional clan-based identities and the emergent criminal syndicates led by so-called "warlords." Religion's increased influence has been largely a phenomenon of small towns and urban centers, although increased adherence to its normative precepts is a wider phenomenon. Islamic religious leaders have helped organize security and other services and businessmen in particular were supportive of the establishment of *sharia*-based courts throughout the south, which was a precursor of the Islamic Courts Union established in Mogadishu in June 2006. The Islamists attempted to fill certain voids left by state collapse and otherwise unattended to by emergent forces like the warlords. In doing so, they also made a bid to supplant clan and other identities, offering a pan-Islamist identity in lieu of other allegiances.³⁶

Given their previous experiences with Somali Islamism, especially in its AIAI incarnation, it was not surprising that, after many of the same extremists emerged in positions of authority in the Islamic Courts Union, the Ethiopians would intervene as they did in 2006 to support Somalia's internationally-recognized but weak "Transitional Federal Government" (TFG), the fourteenth such attempt at a secular national government since 1991.³⁷ Unfortunately, while the intervention ended the rule of the Islamic Courts

Union, it also provoked an insurgency spearheaded by the even more radical *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen* (“Movement of Warrior Youth,” al-Shabaab), a group subsequently designated a “specially designated global terrorist” by the U.S. Department of State in 2008³⁸ and a “listed terrorist organization” by the Australian government the following year.³⁹ Even after Ethiopian troops withdrew in early 2009, the Shabaab-led insurgency against the TFG has continued, drawing the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) deployed to protect the transitional regime deeper into the conflict and causing them to suffer increasing casualties with terrorist attacks like the suicide bombing of September 17, 2009, which killed seventeen peacekeepers and wounded more than forty others,⁴⁰ and that of December 3, 2009, which killed three TFG ministers as well as sixteen other people attending a graduation ceremony within the small enclave of Mogadishu thought to be still controlled by the beleaguered regime.⁴¹

With the end of TFG’s mandate in August 2012, the Somali Federal Government was formed. Depending on how one counts them, the new entity is either the fifteenth or the sixteenth interim regime since the collapse of the Siyad Barre dictatorship in 1991. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, an educator and civil society activist with ties to al-Islah as well as the earlier Union of Islamist Courts, was selected to head the new government, which was formally recognized by the United States in January 2013, the first Somali regime to be accorded that status in more than two decades.

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The Somali governmental policy toward Islamism is muddled, compromised by the complicity of the government in Islamist thought and activity. As a result of the base of support which it enjoys by reason of the circumstances of its birth, while Somali Islamism was damaged by the military defeat dealt to the Islamic Courts Union following the Ethiopian military intervention in late 2006 and early 2007, the chaos into which the Somali territories (outside Somaliland) subsequently sunk under the aegis of the TFG served to revive their standing.⁴² Consequently the Islamists will continue to be a competitive force among the Somalis.⁴³

In March 2009, a unity government was established between the TFG and elements of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). The expansion of the number of seats in parliament to 550, and the election of Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, former ICU leader, as president demonstrated inclusion of a broader spectrum of Islamic ideology in government.⁴⁴ The recent, September 2012 election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president of the Federal Government of Somalia is seen as movement towards more moderate

leadership.⁴⁵ Though a shift towards a more secular governing coalition has occurred, extremist elements in Somalia continue to influence and threaten political order.

At the same time, two further topics require elucidation in the context of governmental response:

The Question of Somaliland

Although the sovereignty it reasserted has yet to be formally recognized by any other state, more than a decade and a half have passed since Somaliland (the north-western region of the former Somalia, bordering on Ethiopia and Djibouti) proclaimed the dissolution of its voluntary union with the central government. Perhaps most important, in the context of the rising tide of Islamist militancy in southern and central Somalia, is the fact that Somaliland's reliance on the older system of clan elders and the respect they command "has served as something of a mediating force in managing pragmatic interaction between custom and tradition; Islam and the secular realm of modern nationalism," leading to a unique situation where "Islam may be pre-empting and/or containing Islamism."⁴⁶ The consequence of having an organic relationship between Somali culture and tradition and Islam appears to assure a stabilizing, rather than disruptive, role for religion in society in general and religion and politics in particular. In Somaliland, for example, the population is almost exclusively Sunni Muslim and the *shahada*, the Muslim profession of the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's final prophet, is emblazoned on the flag; yet *sharia* is only one of the three sources of the jurisprudence in the region's courts alongside secular legislation and Somali traditional law. Unlike the rest of the Somali lands, the region is governed by a democratic constitution approved by 97 percent of the voters in a May 2001 referendum which provides for an executive branch of government, consisting of a directly elected president and vice president and appointed ministers; a bicameral legislature consisting of an elected House of Representatives and an upper chamber of elders, the *guurti*; and an independent judiciary. Somaliland has held presidential elections in 2003 and 2010 and parliamentary elections in 2005, all three of which were judged "free and fair" by international observers.

Not surprisingly, the relative success of Somaliland has drawn the ire of the Islamists in southern and central Somalia. In 2008, on the same day that Shirwa Ahmed, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Minneapolis, Minnesota, blew himself up in an attack on the headquarters of the Puntland Intelligence Service in Bosaso, other suicide bombers from al-Shabaab hit the presidential palace, the UN Development Programme office, and the Ethiopian diplomatic mission in the Somaliland capital of Hargeisa.⁴⁷

Since suffering defeats in south and central Somalia, al-Shabaab fighters are beginning to move into Puntland, posing a major threat to the regional governing institutions and stability.⁴⁸ In the past, semi-autonomous Puntland has criticized Somaliland for ignoring the threat posed by the spread of al-Shabaab militants in northern Somalia.⁴⁹ However, a number of developments—including the effective use of a small coast guard to keep Somaliland largely free of piracy, and the 2009 transfer of two Guantanamo Bay detainees to Hargeisa, rather than the less secure Mogadishu—indicate that Somaliland is seen as less vulnerable to militant Islam than south and central Somalia.⁵⁰ In February 2013, authorities there responded more forcefully to al-Shabaab militants by arresting approximately eighty members, including the son of a Somaliland politician.⁵¹

Islamism and piracy

While there is as yet no evidence of anything other than opportunistic instances of cooperation between Somalia's Islamists and pirates—the latter having played no small role in the ferrying of non-Somali *jihādists* into the country—the ongoing ascendancy of al-Shabaab and its allies does not bode well for efforts to stem the contemporaneous rise of the pirates.⁵²

However, it is incorrect to say that when the Islamic Courts Union briefly held power in Mogadishu in the second half of 2006, the Islamist regime actively fought piracy. There is only one instance where the Islamist forces did anything that could even remotely be characterized as a counter-piracy operation: on November 8, 2006, Islamic Courts Union militia stormed the United Arab Emirates-registered cargo ship MV *Veesham I*, which had been hijacked off Adale, north of Mogadishu on the Somali coast, and arrested its captors. The operation, however, had less to do with any principled opposition to piracy and more to do with the fact that the owner of the *Veesham* was one of the key financial backers of the Islamist movement and that his contribution to its coffers would be affected if he lost his vessel and cargo to the pirates.

In early 2011, it was reported that al-Shabaab had reached a deal with one of the larger piracy syndicates for a 20 percent cut of all future ransoms from piracy and was even opening an office to specifically liaise with the pirates in the port of Xarardheere where the Islamist group would permit the hijackers to anchor seized ships while awaiting ransom payments.⁵³

A 2011 U.S. Congressional Research Service report cites testimony suggesting that Somali pirates are not directly allied with al-Shabaab, but do maintain many of these mutually beneficial financial arrangements.⁵⁴ 2012 saw

a major decline in piracy in the Gulf of Aden, a factor attributable to better adoption of best practices in private maritime security, and increased international patrols.

ENDNOTES

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