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Psychological Anthropology

Country-of-Origin Context – Somalia.

A failed state in four parts. Somalia in total, is a failed state with a divided people at war with themselves in a clash within a civilisation that pits the past against the present, and both against the future. Its territory has been divided by internal and external forces into three segments, even beyond the large portion in the centre that remains under the colonial control of the Ethiopian State and is called Somali-Ogdin. The remainder of the Somali homelands are divided between Somaliland in the northwest, abutting the Republic of Djibouti, and controlled by the Isaaq Clan, which has managed to achieve relative stability thus far. The next segment is a stretch of coastal Somalia that is called Puntland in the northeast and is controlled by the Majerteen-Darood Clan with violent competition from the Islamic State in Somalia. The third segment is the remainder of the original Somali state which now occupies the southeast portion and is the internationally recognised Republic of Somalia. This segment houses the UN and AU backed Federal government in the national capital of Mogadishu, with a president, prime minister, and a bi-cameral parliament.[1,2] For the past quarter century, this government has struggled for legitimacy and control against Islamic-nationalist - extremist organisations and its armed and sovereign clans. The reality of life in and around Mogadishu for the past 20 years, is that, despite vast sums of funding, training, and support, the Somali government has been unable to defeat violent challenges to its sovereignty and is unable to control
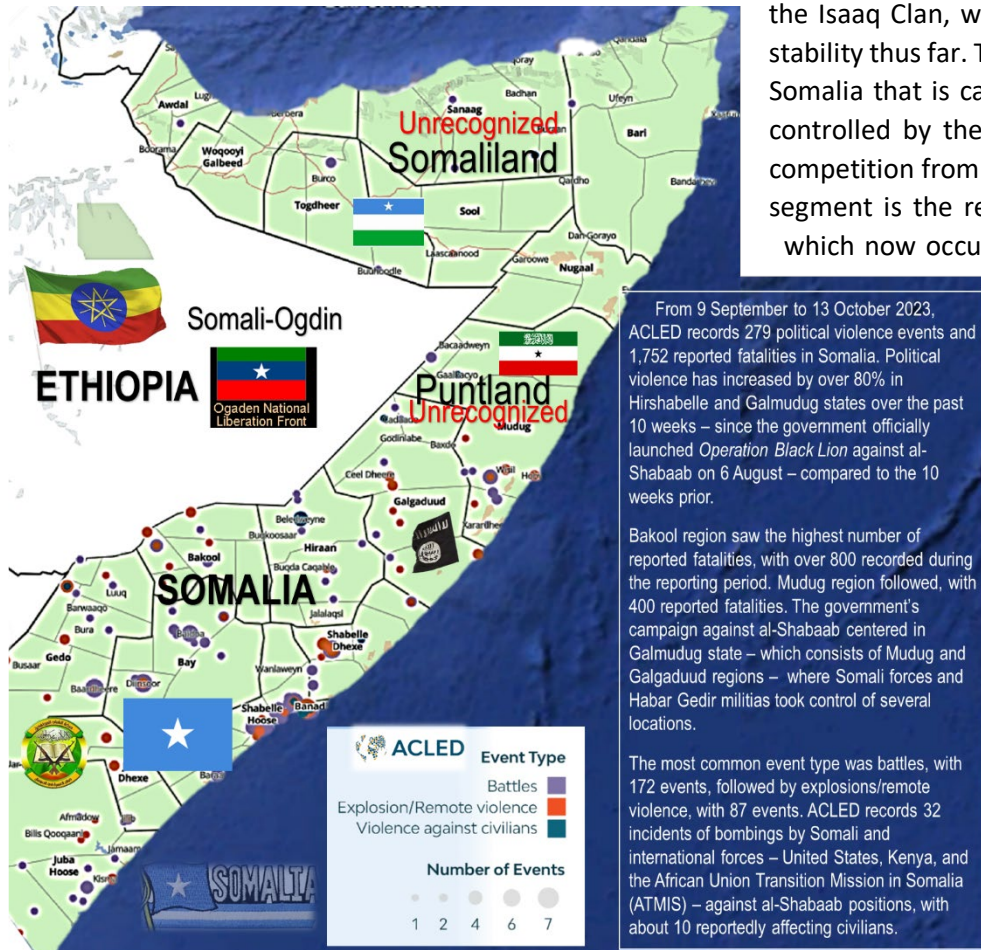

From 9 September to 13 October 2023, ACLED records 279 political violence events and 1,752 reported fatalities in Somalia. Political violence has increased by over 80% in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states over the past 10 weeks – since the government officially launched *Operation Black Lion* against al-Shabaab on 6 August – compared to the 10 weeks prior.

Bakool region saw the highest number of reported fatalities, with over 800 recorded during the reporting period. Mudug region followed, with 400 reported fatalities. The government's campaign against al-Shabaab centered in Galmudug state – which consists of Mudug and Galgaduud regions – where Somali forces and Habar Gedir militias took control of several locations.

The most common event type was battles, with 172 events, followed by explosions/remote violence, with 87 events. ACLED records 32 incidents of bombings by Somali and international forces – United States, Kenya, and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) – against al-Shabaab positions, with about 10 reportedly affecting civilians.

Figure 1 Analysis of Al-Shabaab and Somali Government Areas of Control

it borders or the extremist violence within. The bloody historical and military record shows that the situation in Somalia is not now, nor anywhere near, becoming a state capable of protecting its citizens. Hopeful indicators of progress are overturned by the next violent extremist attack; by the next massacre of civilians by Al-Shabaab, the SNA, or even the African Union Peacekeeping force. The research record shows that deported civilians are unable to procure assistance or protection from their own government; from the SNA, the African Union, or from Western military trainers-advisors. Outside of the Mogadishu city limits, my research indicates the reemergence of Clan-based Militias to protect their populations from not only Al-Shabaab, but from rouge actions of the SNA or AU PK forces.

> *"There were clearly differing perceptions of the security situation in the city of Mogadishu, and it may also have been viewed differently by different actors in the light of their institutional perspectives. There was a certain coalition of interests between the Government, who desperately sought international funding, and the key international donors. The geopolitical aspect of security in Somalia was locked into an international perception of internal security in terms of it containing a major jihadist movement with ramifications to the stability of neighbouring countries. Dr Mullen highlighted that according to a UN monitoring report, Al-Shabaab had built up a powerful secret service under the direct command of the insurgent's chief and even if international efforts to dismantle the group's fighting forces*

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[1] https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/somalia.htm
[2] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14114727

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succeeded, there was still a high chance that the cells under his leadership would continue to operate. In many frontline zones, territory patrolled during the day by AMISOM, was controlled at night by Al-Shabaab."[3]

Somali Clans, Castes, & Ethnic Groups: Social Organisation and Psychological Motivations. If you are reading this, then likely, you are trying to understand who the victims are, who the perpetrators are, and why or how both come to be in the land of the Somali people. Without such an understanding, it is difficult to decide on questions of need and claims of asylum from loss of human rights, violence, torture, and death. This section is most important to western officials of governance and humanitarian oversight given that the social organisation and psychological motivations of constructed societies that have adapted to intrusive globalisation are quite different from the societies that asylum seekers are fleeing from. The UN supported Somali National Government in Mogadishu is organised, trained, and mentored by mostly western nations seeking an end to the (seemingly) never ending violence that ensured post-colonial independence. I refer to this Somali government in Mogadishu as the 'Front Office' of Somali that faces the globalised developed world. Its employees are by and large, educated in London, New York, Paris, and Rome. They are more comfortable in a suit than a robe, a chair rather than a floor, and an airconditioned office rather than a tent or mud-brick hut. These employees live in western style compounds guarded by the Somali National Army, as do, the officers which are also part of this westernised collective, educated in Europe and the Americas. This collective can be thought of as the seeds of a future Somalia, if their nation survives, and if they survive their nation. So, what is the problem? The problem is that the 'Front Office' in Somalia is about as disconnected from the 'Back Office' of Somali society as they can be. The 'front office' of Somali governance possesses a social organisation and psychological structure that is modern and globalised in its nature. The rest of Somali society possesses a social organisation and psychological structure that is inscrutable to the front office governance that purports to speak for them. This separation is why the ongoing conflict in Somalia has become intractable and why violent extremist organisations plying their psychological warfare have not, and will not be, defeated anytime in the foreseeable future. The graphic aid in figure 5 offers a picture of how the Somali 'front office' and the rest of Somali society operate in separate realities.[4] The Somali National Government in

Mogadishu and most all of UK society operate in a psychosocial organisation of <u>egocentricity or individual agency</u>. The remainder of Somali society and the most rural of UK farmers, operate in a <u>sociocentric or collectivist</u> psychosocial reality. Both psychosocial organisations are normal. Naturally occurring for specific reasons that are beyond the scope of this report. But they are usually in conflict and in a state of non-overlapping translation.[5] A modern European government of the 21st Century would likely not survive long if it were governing a nation in the 16th Century, as the two realities would not tolerate each other. Individuals and groups arrive on western shores seeking asylum with narratives that are often inscrutable to the western employees of our security, justice, immigration, and defense services. For those fleeing into exile from Somalia, their narrative can be especially inscrutable, especially the social organisation they are describing in relation to their motivations for fleeing. As well, those fleeing from these Sociocentric or collectivist societies to safety in the egocentric or individualist societies in Europe and North
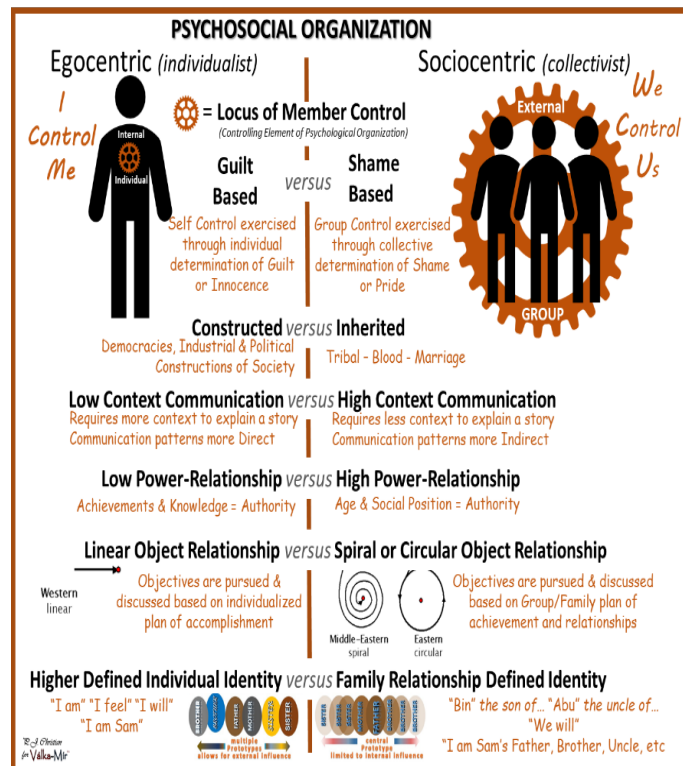

Figure 2 Psychosocial Organisation of Somali versus European societies

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[3] MOJ & Ors (Return to Mogadishu) Somalia CG [2014] UKUT 00442 (IAC) Page 264

[4] The graphic aid in figure 5 is from Valka-Mir Foundation's Military Textbook on Psychological and Partisan Warfare in Indigenous communities and taught to the UK, Canadian, USA, and NATO Special Operations Forces.

[5] (Spence, 1982) non-overlapping translation is a psychological dynamic where two individuals or communities are speaking in the same language and in the same place, but unable to communicate from their separate realities.

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America, describe family, clan, and tribal interactions that appear to us to be at odds with our reality. Whether the person being interviewed is a combatant or a victim seeking asylum refuge, without an understanding of the psychosocial dynamics in figure 5, we will normatively ascribe to their narrative misinformation and suspicion of untruthfulness.

The psychosocial reality of Somali life is intensely sociocentric and intricately based on the concept of "Tol" or patrilineal generational belonging. In fact, the Somali language does not have words for 'clan' and 'lineage', so ubiquitous and normal is this structure of how people fit in together in life. When families are healthy, Somali life is brilliant and secure, with each member tied to a mythical common ancestor in thick boundaries of belonging.[6] When families are damaged or destroyed, the possibilities for survival of members decreases exponentially, especially for the vulnerable women and children and those groups 'outside' the clan framework of Somali life. The framework of Somali life is divided between the dominant pastoral nomadic (cattle and camel) and subordinate sedentary (farming, fishing, trading, and manufacturing. Nobility in clans is only afforded to nomadic pastoralism that follows the psychosocial construction of the Bedouin Abbala (camel) and Baggara (cattle) tribes. The major pastoral nomadic clans are the Darod Clan (green colour), Hawiye Clan (pink colour), Isaaq Clan (beige colour) and Dir Clan (Light green colour).[7]

Figure 3 Ethnographic distribution of Somali clans
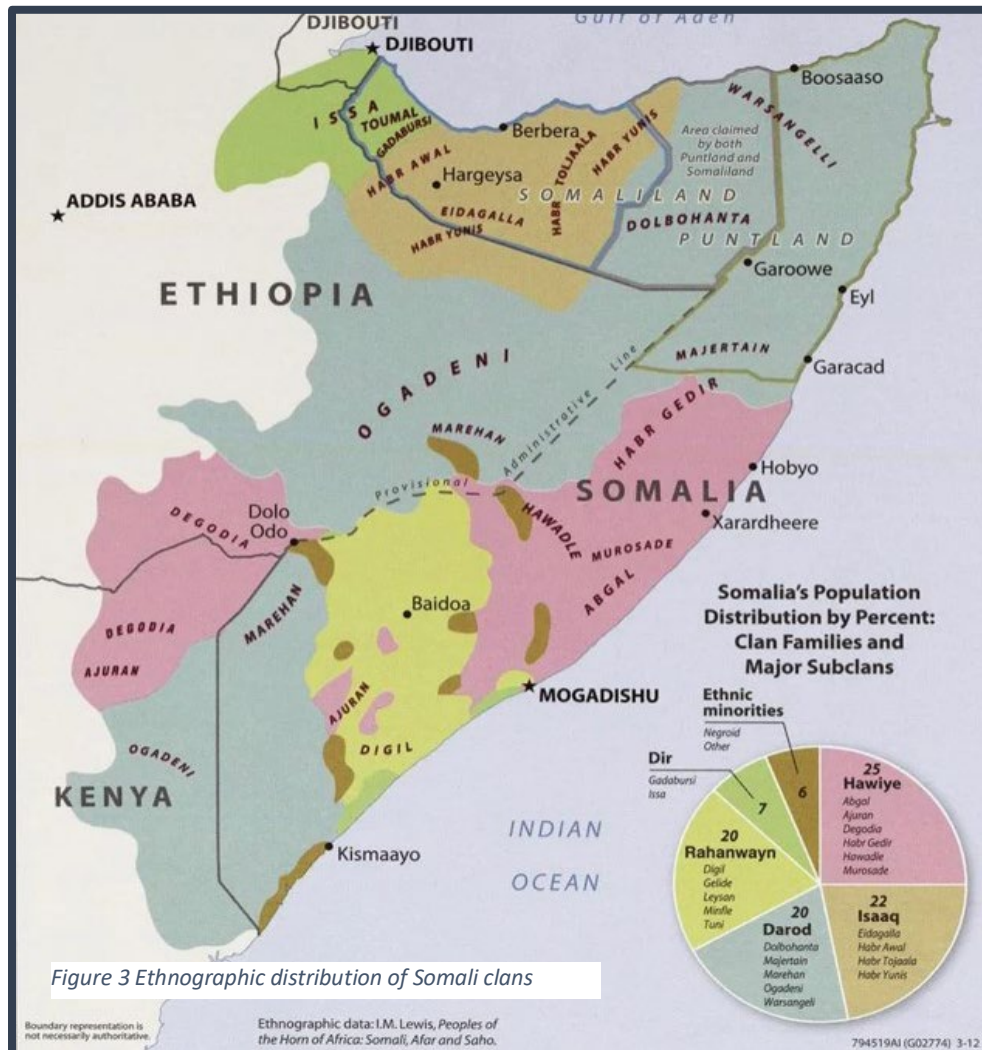
All four of these clans can be further divided into sub-clans, as shown on the map in figure 6.[8] The major sedentary clans are the Rahanweyn in the colour yellow, with the Mirifle Clan and Digil Clan forming most of this group.[9] These clans are further divided into sub-clans like their nomadic counterparts. Thinly spread out amongst these major clans are several non-Somali ethnic communities of negroid, Banjuni fishermen, and Arab-Persians whose presence in the Horn of Africa predates many of the clans. Non-ethnic minorities are easily recognisable as being not of Somali ethnicity. Finally, there are a series of minority low caste lineages within each clan that are ethnically Somali but are outcast family lineages that are shunned and regarded as undesirable, despite their necessity in the socioeconomic system. Their low caste stems from historical precedent, often created because of their socioeconomic placement as people who provide needed services that are considered 'unclean' or even dirty by both nomadic and sedentary clans. Examples include cutting hair, metalwork, hunting, circumcision & female genital mutilation, and the like. Often, the outcast families' connection to their original outcast reason is vague, but the outcast lineages serve as a type of 'dirty-other' used by the sedentary and nomadic clans to positively

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[6] (Menkhaus, 2005)
[7] (Last & Seaboyer, 2011)
[8] (Lewis, 1994; SALIH, 2003)
[9] (Bulbul, 2023)

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compare themselves to. Examples of these types of outcast lineages are families descended from the Yibir, Midgaan, Bon, and Tumal lineages.[10] The members of these families bear no identifying physical traits, that separate them from other ethnic Somali's, but they are known and generally treated as second-class members of the clan their lineage is descended from. This is because they play an important, albeit dysfunctional and unwanted, role within Somali life as the psychosocial 'outgroup' that helps define and valuate the rest of the clan's families as the psychosocial 'ingroup.'[11] The non-outcast family lineages in each clan 'use' these outcast lineages as psychological tools to cast-off unwanted traits, actions, thoughts, or attributes. This type of psychological projection is referred to as 'trait dissociation' and is part of every human community psychological housekeeping function. In communities such as the Somali clans, the outgroup to their ingroup are family structures that are formally designated to be on the receiving end of the dissociation of unwanted traits and their maltreatment serves to help the ingroup disavow their projections as they disavow the outcast families. The significance of this relationship is such that no non-outcast lineage would ever falsely ascribe themselves and their family as outcast because the internal psychological alienation and shame that accompanies such a reality would be more than they can bear. These outcast families carry the psychological baggage that the rest of the clan lineages have deemed unworthy. Impure. Dirty.[12] These outcast families have restrictions on their expectations of resources, protection, and leadership and are considered ritually impure. Noble clan families will not even share food or lodging or intimacy with them.[13] The clan to which they belong extracts *diya* or blood compensation payments from them but are not allowed to ask for *diya* assistance themselves. They are rarely compensated for injury or death at the hand of their clan's non-outcast members and are without protection when nomadic pastoralists destroy their crops with livestock.[14] The relationship between the clans and their minority outcast lineage is one of disenfranchisement and exploitation and considered to be an internal clan-family matter that is not subject to interference by outside authority. Figure 7 is the stated reasoning of the UK Home Office of why they reject asylum applicant's assertion of her clan lineage being Midgaan/Madhibaan. Outcast

> *"You told us you were a member of the Midgan tribe in Somalia, when asked how one would know you were from this tribe, you stated you do not tell anyone, so that you could avoid discrimination. This is inconsistent with your claim that the men who were attending your home address looking for you would know you were part of this tribe, if this is information you did not disclose. When asked about your tribe, you lacked specificity and detail. You failed to provide us with information on whether there was a tribe leader or any sub-clans and stated your parents never told you about them. This is not considered reasonable, nor is it reasonably likely you would not know this information, as by your own admission, this is a tribe you were born into and was the cause of your problems in Somalia."*

UK Home Office Reasoning for not accepting claimant's membership in the Madhibaan tribe. *Figure 4*

families do not choose to be outcast; they have descended from outcast lineages for longer than their family remembrances. Parents do not speak of their outcast status openly with their children as doing so deepens the feelings of alienation and shame. Children learn of their membership in an outcast family lineage not from within, but from without. Every non outcast family of the clan will 'sharpen their value' against the outcast outgroup by reminding them of their low status.

Survival within Somalia is a generational affair where 70% of Somalis between the ages of 14-29 do not have jobs, nor do they have the skills even if they were available.[15] Physical and psychological survival is dependent on dense networks of family, kin, and clan relationships that create a social

Somali Minority Groups
1. -Geboyo
2. –Yibro
3. –Yaharo
4. –Tomal
5. -Madhiban Midgaan Gaboye
6. -Hawrarsame
7.-Fiki Yakub
8. –Jaaji
9. –Lo'jir
10. -Waat
11. –Bajuni
12. -Mushunguli
13. –Swahili
14. -Gabawayn
15. –Buunle

Madhibaan Girl

Figure 5 Somali Minority Groups

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[10] (Staff, 2012)
[11] (Christian, 2011, 2014, 2018a)
[12] (Eno & Kusow, 2014)
[13] (Refworld, 2013)
[14] (Gundel, 2009a)
[15] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56879935

3/31/2024

Valka-Mir Foundation report on psychosocial conditions in SOMALI

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safety net in form of customary law known as Xeer.[16] Each economic position found for a new member of a society is a repayment of an earlier favourable action by that member's family or kin. Somalis depend exclusively on their family and clan networks for economic, social, and physical protection.[17] Clans and family groups represent and protect its members against other clans and outsiders. This social safety network demands absolute loyalty to the ingroup, especially in difficult times, where there are insufficient resources for survival of everyone.[18] Members of other clans, especially inferior and or minority clans, are not welcome in neighbourhoods of other clans. Members of clans caught offering support to outsiders would be swiftly and severely punished if caught.[19] Outcast caste members are routinely harassed, beaten, raped, or killed, with impunity from the security services. NGOs are constantly besieged with applicants and local NGO staff operate in the same manner as described above; family, kin, and clan networks control who gets economic benefits and survives. The remainder move, become refugees, or are recruited by VEO or criminal organizations which weaponize them through trauma to psychological extremism and behavioural radicalization sufficient to be of temporary (suicidal) or long term (fighter) value.[20] In Mogadishu, there are government ministries for refugees and humanitarian action. But what little capacity they have is absorbed by the nearly 100,000 residents that have fled their homes in search of food, water, and pasture for livestock. "Across the country, the number of people who need assistance and protection is forecast to rise by 30 per cent, from 5.9 million to about 7.7 million in 2022. Over 70 per cent of all Somalis live below the poverty line."[21] Mr. Saleh's ability to move freely outside of Mogadishu's populated public spaces where members of all clans and families congregate, is negligeable. His attempt to leave this public city centre would bring immediate discovery of his presence, his ethnic social and unprotected status, and he would be at the mercy of the first armed or unarmed group that he encountered. The local armed militias that operate to protect their clan spaces and members would not react well to the presence of a young man of the Bajuni caste and would likely beat him and force him to turn back. Should a vulnerable Bajuni encounter elements of Al-Shabaab, he would be abducted, broken, and pressed into service as a labourer or fighter. As bad as conditions inside Mogadishu are, conditions for this community outside of Mogadishu are even less hospitable. The ongoing drought in the lower Shabelle region of south Somalia has made survival there difficult even for favoured clans.[22] Tens of thousands of families are in transit to refugee locations at any given time and thousands more are desperately fighting over dwindling water holes trying keep human and animal alive. In the areas outside of Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab openly controls the many of the towns from Ba'lad in the north to Barawa on the coast and Jilib in middle Juba. Towns like Barawa, Sablale, and Janale are in open contest between AUMIS backed Somali forces and Al-Shabaab. In-between, local militias fielded by clans without alignment to government or VEO, roam the countryside and are a threat to anyone who is not supposed to be in that clan's communal areas.[23] Civilians can move outside of Mogadishu only with the permission of the clans that control the area they are moving in.[24] The members of the Bajuni caste are easily distinguishable by the dialect that they speak and by their genealogy recitation.[25] The former is akin to a regional accent, while the latter is an indelible mark of psychosociological placement in a tribal society that is heavily preoccupied with bloodlines. Somali parents teach their children the secret history of who they are, where they came from, and the genealogical steps that locate their family within the Somali ethnic people.[26] Somalis by custom, engage in a question and answer greeting to learn each other's clan placement. This sort of 'who's who' is of central importance in Somali life, whether at home or in diaspora, and to a degree that western's find difficult to comprehend or even follow.[27] It is this accent/dialect and genealogical

16 (Lewis, 1994)
17 (Koshen, 2007)
18 (Odenwald et al., 2007b)
19 (Samad, 2021)
20 (Christian, 2020)
21 https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106222
22 (TEMPIA et al., 2010)
23 Template: Somali Civil War detailed map - Wikipedia with confirmation from researcher's own sources in the UN Mission in Somalia (Mr. Hussain Abdullahi) and at AUMIS.
24 (Kefale, 2010)
25 (Luling, 2006)
26 (Christian, 2016b)
27 Primary research and confirmed through follow up with the Somali International Minorities of America Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota. (501c3 Organization chartered in the State of MN and registered with the Federal Government of the USA.)

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recitation that make it impossible for someone of the Bajuni caste to remain innocuous or inconspicuous. Simply put, the comings and goings of people in Somalia are whispered in the wind long before one arrives at their destination. Al-Shabaab continues to exert influence and terrorizing control over the families and clans in the region even as they co-exist with the neutral clan militias and extend their control over additional towns. Barawa city, Awdheegle town, Gondershe coastal town, Wajid, Janale, and Buur Heybe Town, are all in contested conflict between Al-Shabaab militia and the Somali National Army. The towns of Jilib, Bu'ale, Saakow, Bardera, Busaar, Bush Madina, Ceel Adde, Tiyeglow, El Ali, Adan Yabal, El Dher, and Mareeg are all locations that Al-Shabaab is currently occupying and controlling. In the spaces between SNA unit locations, governance and control is asserted by Al-Shabaab, at times, in an uneasy co-existence with the tribal militias of the larger tribes.

An illusion of governance and security. Between official UN, AU, USA, UK, and EU depictions of the south Somalia federal government and the actuality of life on the ground, we find that governance and security is more of an illusion than a reality. This AU and UN backed federal government that is based in Mogadishu is held up with African Union firepower and western funding, consisting of a sort of 'front-office' for Somalia that without any attachment to most of the population that it claims to govern and protect. As of this report, the international community and the Somali National Government in Mogadishu have established a full withdrawal date of December 2024 for all foreign forces of the UN and AU.[28] The 275-seat parliament, meanwhile, remains mostly empty as only a few of the representatives have been elected or seated. The violent political situation within the south Somali government in Mogadishu is not new. Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda suicide bombers have been attacking the presidential palace (Sept 2021)[29], journalists (Nov 2021)[30], African Union Peacekeepers (Nov 2021), schools (Nov 2021)[31], and overran Somali and AU security forces in the town of Bal'ad, only 30 kilometres north of Mogadishu.[32] In 2022, the new Somali president, Hassan Sheikh Mahamud, launched a furious onslaught against Al Shabaab, focusing combat support against clans that were already rebelling against Al Shabaab. The results of this campaign by Somali National Army, USA, AU, and other international allies, resulted in the most effective offensive against Al Shabaab since 2016:

> "...expelling al-Shabaab from areas it had controlled for over a decade, and in March 2023 the government launched phase two to attack al-Shabaab in the south. However, concerns remain about Somalia's ability to hold the areas it has cleared and take more territory given the planned drawdown of foreign troops and the fact that southern clans have not shown the same propensity to turn on al-Shabaab." [33]

Although the 2022 offensive weakened Al Shabaab's hold on territory, its attacks against civilians and the western backed Somali government have increased. In 2022, there was a 41 percent increase in al-Shabaab violence

African Union Contributing Country	Armed personnel (current)		Casualties	
	Troops	Police	Killed	Missing or captured
🇺🇬 Uganda People's Defence Force	6,223	201	110-2,700+	
🇧🇮 Burundi National Defence Force	5,432		95+	4 missing, 1 captured
🇪🇹 Ethiopian National Defense Force	4,395		2+	
🇰🇪 Kenya Defence Forces	3,664	48	36–118	
🇩🇯 Djibouti Armed Forces	960		8+	
🇸🇱 Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces	850	47	1	
🇳🇬 Nigeria Police Force		200		
🇬🇭 Ghana Police Service		56		
Total	20,674	550+	1,108-3,000+	5

Figure 6 African Union Contributing Countries to stabilise Somalia.

[28] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56879935
[29] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/mogadishu-somalia-b1926888.html
[30] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/20/al-Shabaab-suicide-bomber-kills-prominent-journalist-in-mogadishu
[31] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/25/large-explosion-rocks-somali-capital-mogadishu
[32] https://www.trtworld.com/africa/al-Shabaab-carries-out-deadly-attack-near-somalia-s-mogadishu-53140
[33] (Center for Preventive Action, 2023)

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targeting civilians. Al-Shabaab has also kept up attacks against foreign military forces; in 2022 and 2023 it conducted numerous incursions into the border regions of Kenya and Ethiopia, and in June 2023 it killed fifty-four Ugandan peacekeepers in an assault on an AU base. The relationship between Somali forces, the African Union peacekeepers, and the Somali population has also begun to deteriorate, which is a central objective of Al-Shabaab. Two AU peacekeeping soldiers were sentenced to death and three others given 39-year prison terms for killing of seven civilians in November of 2021.[34] This followed the ejection of African Union envoy Simon Mulongo from Somalia on November 4th, 2021.[35] The information graphic on the next page depicts the approximate territorial control of Al Shabaab and the AMISOM backed Somali National Army as of 30 November 2022 from open-source intelligence, news media, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project[36], governmental and NGO reporting. The areas in pink are controlled by Al-Qaeda affiliate in Somalia, Al-Shabaab. The areas in yellow are under the control of the African Union and or Somali National Army. The striped areas are mixed, unclear, or local control, and the black circles are nominally under the control of the AMISOM backed forces.[37]

Even in the areas under the control of AMISOM-Somali forces however, Al-Shabaab maintains an insurgent network in these locations that the SNA and ATMIS are unable to shut down.[38] The covert presence of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) insurgent networks in federal government areas works to gain compliance and control over the population. The population serves as a recruitment base, as well as a basis of support and concealment. These networks plan and execute kinetic (lethal) attacks against the AMISOM backed Somali forces, keeping them inside of their armoured vehicles and therefore, limiting their access to the civilian population. These kinetic attacks also work to create trauma within the security forces, enticing them to lash-out against the vulnerable civilian population as described in in 6.3 above. This type of action-reaction is an important psychosocial-emotional effect that is purposefully engineered by the VEOs. The violent reaction by the security services against the vulnerable population helps ensure the continued destabilization of the government and the social state, allowing the VEOs to continue operations and to expand. Government provided point-security is available in south Somalia and is provided to dedicated government offices and personnel in the federal government as well as their families. AMISOM and UN forces provide point-security for international locations and international staff, while privatized security forces are available for purchase for NGOs and commercial interests at varying rates dependent on likelihood of attack and abduction. The rest of south Somali society is left to survive between the (at times) haphazard combat operations of the various government, non-government militias, and the extremist, insurgent, and criminal organizations.

Basis of leadership goals and objectives – power and economics. Part of the success of modern violent extremist insurgencies such as Al-Shabaab, is a capacity to mutate and adapt to maintain organizational relevance. Their power and ideas (ideology) flow through specific ethnic and cultural communities which are damaged, dispersed, traumatized, and then weaponized. As the damaged cultural group (in this case Somali) disperses into neighbouring states and refugee camps, so too does the seeds of future psychological extremism, behavioural radicalization, and violent weaponization. These types of extremist insurgencies are less like political movements and more like an epidemiological spread of cancer. Al-Shabaab's spread westward into Ethiopia was blunted by a series of offensives that I assisted with during my time in Special Forces. Since then, Al-Shabaab turned to the southwest, into Kenya, travelling within the flow of war refugees that they themselves caused. Intentionally. Al-Shabaab operates as an alternative political state structure that competes with the UN recognized state. The type of governance is distinctly authoritarian with a legal structure that is advertised by the VEO cadre as orthodox. Under close examination, however, my research colleagues in Saudi Arabia and I found that the Al-Shabaab political legal ideological structure could best be understood as a fabricated collection of modified passages drawn from a religious text that are

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[34] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/14/au-troops-sentenced-to-death-for-civilian-killings-in-somalia

[35] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/4/somalia-gives-au-envoy-7-days-to-leave-country

[36] https://acleddata.com/#/dashboard

[37] (United Nations Security Council, 2020)

[38] The original graphic is available at the following URL: www.polgeonow.com

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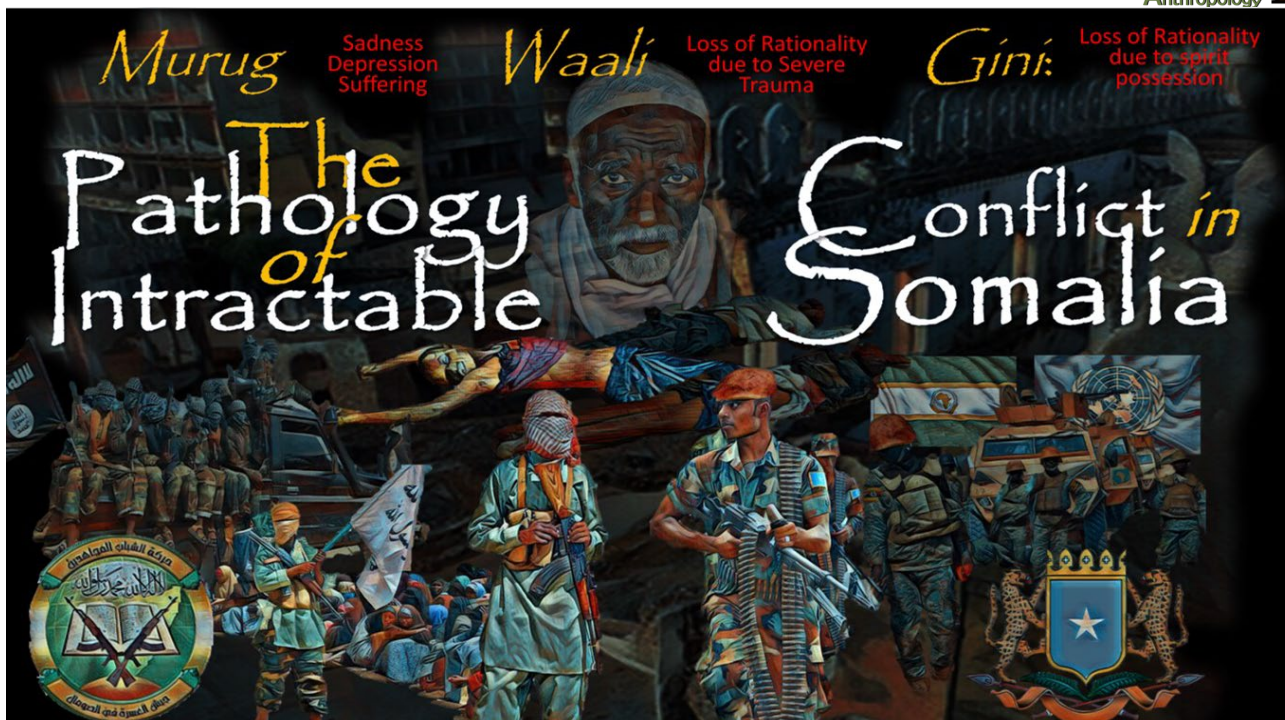Dr. Mohamadou Amar
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Figure 7 Information Graphic on participants in Somali Conflict

combined with content designed to validate authoritarian control.[39,40] We interviewed detained ISIS and Al-Shabaab fighters and found that nearly all of them were illiterate. During interviews, they articulated reason and purpose based on resolving psychosocial alienation and extreme feelings of shame and rage, often created through deep traumatization at the hands of the Al-Shabaab and ISIS recruiters.[41] This reasoning and purpose enunciated by our interviewees was authoritatively recited by rote memorization and our clinical engagement allowed us to catalogue their responses as part of deep psychological traumatization and programming that is described more fully below. Collectively, our research suggested that this religio-political mix was used to create a basis for population and resource control in an oligarchic-type social benefit arrangement that enriches a small segment of leadership, somewhat likened to a pyramid scheme.[42,43,44.] While Al-Shabaab is a designated terrorist group by the UK, US, EU, AU, UN, and NATO, the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, singled out two of these leaders for designation as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) under USA Executive Order 13224, as amended.[45,46]

Basis of VEO/Al-Shabaab management. This section describes the narrow leadership segment of any violent extremist organization senior management, organizing operational planning and execution, finance, intelligence, weapons/munitions procurement, and IO/IW. They understand the capabilities of the basic fighter versus the capabilities needed to plan and execute operations that increase their viability and the revenue that follows. For Al-Shabaab, leadership consists of a council or Shura, with each member possessing 'portfolios' of responsibility to

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[39] (Christian, 2016b)

[40] In 2019, I worked as a visiting professor in Riyadh, with Valka-Mir colleague Dr. Tasneem Salman Aljehani of the Naif Arab University School of Security Studies, Brigadier General (Dr.) Saed Alsubaie - Dean of the Saudi National Guard Defence College, and Dr. Abdullah bin Khaled al Saud, the Director of Research at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies. Whilst there, we collaborated on the research described in Al-Saud, 2019.

[41] (Al-Saud, 2019)

[42] https://www.reuters.com/article/somalia-security/somali-islamist-insurgents-pile-up-cash-says-u-n-report-idINKBN26Z18N

[43] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security/super-efficient-somali-islamists-rake-in-cash-idUSKBN26Z18F

[44] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/dutch-national-faces-charges-participation-terror-financing-ring

[45] https://www.state.gov/designations-of-isis-mozambique-jnim-and-al-shabaab-leaders/

[46] Ali Hussain Rage, also known as Ali Dheere, is al-Shabaab's spokesman and a senior leader of the group. He replaced Sheikh Mukhtar Robowas al-Shabaab's top spokesman in May 2009. Rage has been involved in attack planning that has targeted areas in Kenya and Somalia. Abdikadir Hussain Abdikadir, also known as Ikrima, is a facilitator and operational planner. As of November 2019, Abdikadir was an al-Shabaab senior leader and served as the Head of Operations and Logistics. Abdikadir had also directed previous attack planning for al-Shabaab.

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the enterprise.[47]   The small controlling layer of VEO leadership consists of socio-political leaders and organizers-executers of violent actions such as assassinations, suicide-attacks, raids, and ambushes.
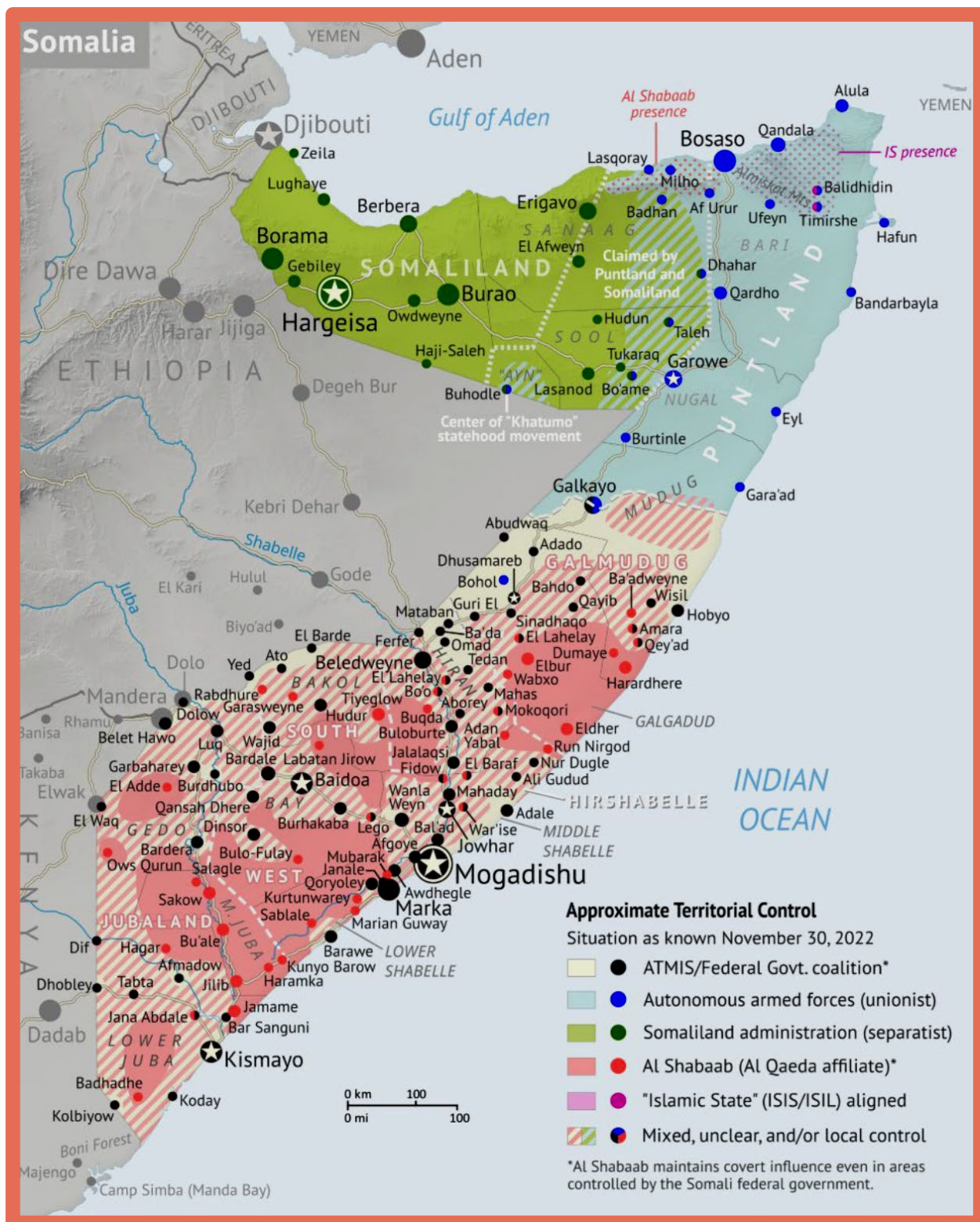

Figure 8 Information Graphic on expanded areas of control by all Armed Combatants in Somalia

These leaders are supported by functionaries who are skilled at financial operations, social media manipulation, weapons and explosives manufacturing and acquisition, and managers skilled at transportation and logistical support. The men and women who comprise VEO/Al-Shabaab leadership lead organizational functions for personal

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[47] As an American Army Special Forces Officer, my primary mission was Unconventional (insurgent) Warfare colloquially known as UW, and its opposite, counterinsurgency. I have performed the former in Africa and the latter in Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and Asia. (Christian, 2007)

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financial profit that also benefit the organizations financial and structural goals. Many have full time positions in government and private industry and moonlight on the side, supporting VEO and insurgent operations.[48] These men and women are the primary target of international intelligence and security services, which find them difficult to identify, track, and capture. Their protection from security services is usually through concealment and they do not usually engage in the violence part of the organisation's activities.[49] The nature of VEOs such as Al-Shabaab requires them to 'soak-into' the population as described above, so they can break it down socially and psychologically at the family and clan level of organization. This is accomplished using violence and the instillation of psychosocial-emotional alienation, shame, and rage. The 'tenderized' society is then sufficiently malleable for the VOE to feed-off of its resources, recruit its victims-survivors, dwell, and hide amongst them as a human shield against government security services.[50] This requires the VEO to recruit a variety of men, women, and children to serve in these roles and VEO operatives are always searching for human capital to break, weaponize and exploit. They cannot grow and survive without this constant in-flow of new human capital to operate as labour, fighters, and suicide weapons. The recruitment of young men and children to become suicidal or kamikaze fighters requires them to become psychologically broken.[51] [52] UN reports on the brutality of Al-Shabaab's recruitment elucidates practices of Al-Shabaab's forceable recruitment. The inter-relationship between violent extremist organizations like Al-Shabaab and the civilian population that they work to break and weaponize is incredibly complex. Many of the current VEO cadre, were themselves, forcibly recruited, broken, and weaponized. This cycle of creating victims only to create perpetrators for employment can be, and is now, a self-sustaining engine of conflict with a logic of violence that is little understood by the western societies trying to intervene. A primary characteristic of this cycle of victimization-creation and perpetration-employment is that it involves the purposeful creation of subconscious trauma that alters the reality of the traumatized person. Traumatized persons may appear to act irrationally to the untraumatized. But their actions are fully rational to the subconscious mind as it operates within its own damaged reality. What makes Al-Shabaab and other VEOs so dangerous is that it and they, are not like western security formations with tight command and control, supervision, and obedience to directives.[53] Because the conditions for VEO epidemiology involve the deliberate traumatization of human communities through inflicted violence, the danger is that even if the VEO wins, as in the case of Afghanistan, the brushfire of traumatization continues to engulf the population because it takes on a life of its own.[54] The motivations and actions of weaponized civilians employed by VEOs like Al-Shabaab can only be understood through the analytical lenes of anthropologically curated psychology, not through analytical lenses of political or military science.[55] The technical reports listed in this report provide a wealth of social science research on the functioning of weaponized human beings that are created and employed by violent extremist organizations.[56]

Basis of VEO/Al-Shabaab soldier-fighter recruitment. This section describes the difficulties that any military or militia faces in getting their fighters to cross the Rubicon of inflicting violence on other human beings. Violent extremist, insurgent, terrorist militia have even more difficulty making young men and women cross that psychological barrier because they often must be closer to their targets; they often know their targets; and they often experience the aftereffects of their attack. The easiest recruit to overcome this psychological refusal to inflict grievous harm on other human beings is one who is already deeply psychologically damaged, especially with deep trauma of alienation borne of rejection. Alienation as a psychological thought, conjugates directly to the cognitive emotion of shame, which results in anger in the awake, executive agency in the prefrontal cortex. Shame-anger that is unmitigated, and reinforced by repeated external stimuli, evolves into psychological rage that is quite useful in encouraging or inciting an individual into the commission of violence. Once that Rubicon is crossed, it is much

[48] (Christian, 2011)
[49] (Christian, 2006, 2013) (PDF) Brokering the Peace in Sudan (researchgate.net)
[50] (Christian, 2018)
[51] (Christian, 2020)
[52] (Government of Canada, 2002)
[53] (Christian et al., 2018)
[54] (Christian, 2016a)
[55] (Christian, 2019)
[56] (Gundel, 2009; Research Directorate, 1990; UK Home Office, 2012b, 2012a)

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easier for their recruit's leaders to deepen the psychological trauma and intensify the recruit's willingness to perform extremely violent deeds on order. The actual fighting and dying within the VEO organization are performed by men (and sometimes women) who are recruited into the VEO organization by a variety of strategies, none of them pleasant or healthy. The most common method of recruitment is abduction by force, threat of force, or threat of violence against family. Once in possession of the recruit, a specialized member of the management segment creates the necessary psychological conditions in the recruit to induce a willingness/desire to become a kamikaze fighter or suicide weapon. This often involves a subconscious psychological process known as 'registration,' where the recruit is forced to perpetrate a violent act intended to cause him/her violent psychological trauma. Registration is most effective when the forced violent act is against a loved one or at least against a person who is obviously helpless. For more information on this process, please refer to Chapter 7, Origin and Epidemiology: Extremism and Radicalization are Psychological Processes, not Religious Beliefs, in Countering Transregional Terrorism, published by the United States Joint Special Operations University.[57] Al-Shabaab, like most such violent extremist organizations, should be thought of as a series of violent franchises that are independently owned, yet centrally guided, disciplined, and resourced. Each franchise is a "localized unit of Al-Shabaab" and responsible for their recruitment, psychological grooming (for violent action on demand), training to accomplish assigned tasks, and the like. Military aged males who are not owned-protected by family/clan, and who have experiences external to the narrow world of the conflict community, would be a prized resource. Young Somalis with foreign life experiences have skills such as literacy, such as the ability to operate a motor vehicle, such as an ability engage in banking, and even speaking English with greater fluency than the average poor Somali boy. Each potential recruit is reduced to a commodity to be taken and used at the will of whomever has need of him. The children of powerful clans and families are least likely to be targeted for recruitment, especially those clans/families with capable militias of their own. For minority and untouchable clans' young sons, if they are unluckily to be targeted, it is preferable to be so by a criminal organization who might reward him (financially and securitization) for lengthy criminal service. Regardless of which type of organization gets to him first, he will not be allowed to simply exist as an independent person of independent individual agency over his body, his life, and his future. That is not how it works in Somalia unless one is diseased, disabled, and or under the care of an NGO. My research into registrations illustrates several tactics used by VEOs such as Al-Shabaab to recruit members. Children are killed in front of a father and or mother to alienate them from their own archetypes of parent, saviour, protector of their innocent children. Older siblings are forced to kill a younger sibling that they were or felt responsible to care for. Younger siblings are forced to kill an older care-giver sibling or parent. The goal is to alienate each individual member against their own self; then alienate each family member against each other; then alienate the family and families of minority and outcast segments against the larger, more protected segments of the society that has aligned with the government and its protective security services. Then, wherever the government has been induced to include members of these minority outcasts into sensitive positions in government or security, each of such individuals becomes a pathway inside for the VEO planners and leaders to strike.[58]

Basis of VEO/Al-Shabaab operational support. This section describes the parasitic and destructive methodology of violent extremist insurgencies that leads to a pyramidal growth of movement organizations such as Al-Shabaab. They survive and thrive through the extraction of material support from the general population and the inculcation of psychosocial-emotional pain and resulting grievances. Assassinations, suicide bombings of marketplaces, government buildings, and businesses each serve to advance a specific agenda to create disorganization in the opposing government; create compliance through terror in the population; and extort funding and resources from every possible entity that the VEO has access to. VEOs in operation function much like large criminal organizations. They are parasitic, decentralized, and pyramidal in growth and spread. Violent extremist insurgencies cannot survive in a society that is deeply cohered, with its member segments focused inward on protecting, caring for, and supporting each other. This reduces their capacity to induce violent psychosocial trauma necessary to weaponize them into fighters capable of killing on order. The creation

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[57] (Christian et al., 2018) accessible via stable URL : ld.php (libguides.com)
[58] (Christian, 2011)

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of anarchy; of chaos, of widespread psychosocial trauma within the population is the end-state intention of a VEO such as Al-Shabaab. I created Figure 7 to visualize and compare the clinical effects of widespread psychosocial trauma to the goals of the malign state and non-state extremist organization.[59] Somali expert witness Ms. Harper's[60] statements in a similar 2014 case[61] offers deeper context that relates to the graphic in Figure 7. Compare each of her statements below to the graphic:

> "It was not only Al-Shabaab conducting acts of violence and abuse against civilians, members of the Somali security forces, and to a lesser extent AMISOM troops, were also responsible. Somalis in Mogadishu were not able to depend on the police or judicial system for protection. The judiciary was corrupt and virtually non-existent and there were frequent reports of abuse of civilians by the police. In some districts, most civilian males carried weapons and were prepared to use them." Ms. Harper, Page 269

> "The security situation in Mogadishu had changed significantly since Al-Shabaab's abrupt withdrawal from the city in August 2011. … The city remained dangerous, with regular acts of violence carried out by Al-Shabaab, the Somali security services and other armed groups and individuals. Civilians were often caught up in the violence. The violence had become more unpredictable … attacks could happen anywhere at any time." Ms. Harper, Page 270

> "Al-Shabaab maintained a presence and ability to strike in most of the towns in South-Central Somalia from which it had officially withdrawn. Many regions were also politically and militarily unstable with inter-clan violence on the rise. The changes in the security in South-Central Somalia since August 2011, and their durability, were heavily dependent on the continued presence of AMISOM troops. The Somali security forces were unable to take charge, with clashes sometimes erupting between different clan groups within the Somali army and increased tension over land leading to a resurgence of clan violence." Ms. Harper, Page 270
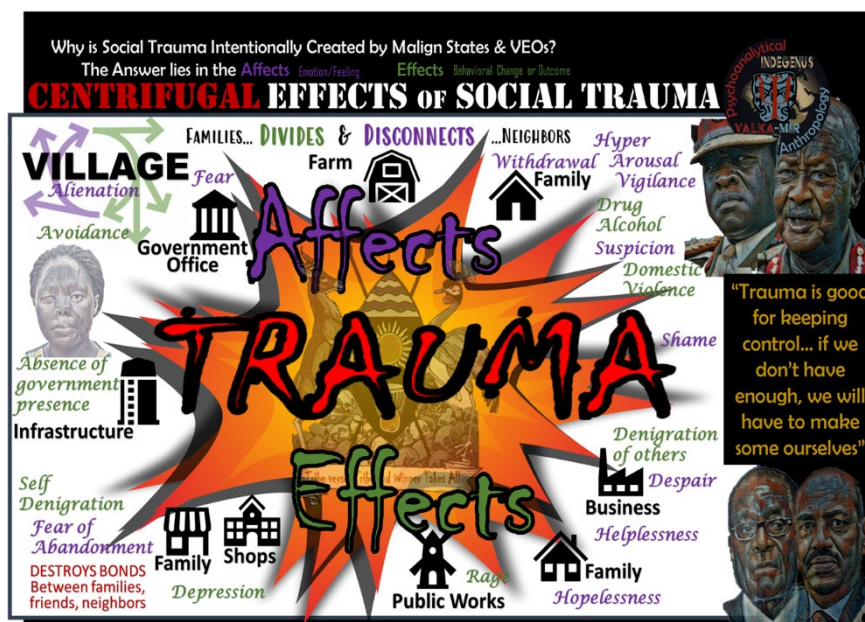

Figure 9 - Preparation of the Civil Environment by Violent Extremist Organizations and Malign Authoritarian States

What the courts miss is the *intentionality* of the violence that VEOs like Al-Shabaab create. The courts are under the impression that the government of Somalia and its western supporters are fighting against an armed force driven by ideological purity of Islamic thought. But, in fact, they are fighting against their own society that has been purposefully broken (psychologically and sociologically) and turned against that western backed government as a weapon. Al-Shabaab prevents the Somali government, and the AU Peacekeeping forces from winning by creating conditions of violent psychological trauma.[62] As Dr. Mullen added in his supplemental report:

> "The tactic of Al-Shabaab was not to engage AMISOM directly in head-on battle confrontations but rather to rely on suicide bombings and guerrilla tactics. When Al-Shabaab occupied large areas of

Mogadishu, the tactic was to attack AMISOM from civilian areas whose populations were used as human shields. AMISOM often retaliated with blanket fire and mortars, which often resulted in high levels of civilian casualties. Under the new dispensation of

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[59] This graphic is used to instruct UK, US, CAN, and NATO interventionists into violent civilian conflict by Valka-Mir Human Security Foundation.

[60] As a researcher, I am aware of Ms. Harper's notoriety in assisting ethnic Somali men of avoiding their deportation after being convicted of brutal violent crimes in the United Kingdom. As I noted in my disclaimers in §2, I am not a proponent nor opponent of immigration or asylum laws in the UK, USA, Canada, or Europe. I only focus on the internal realities of life in the countries of origin that I research and report on, especially the psychosocial-emotional motivations and drivers of violent breakdown and weaponization of human civilian societies against each other, against governance, and against international globalization.

[61] Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) case of MOJ & Ors (Return to Mogadishu) Somalia CG [2014] UKUT 00442, Determination Promulgated (IAC) The Immigration Acts, Heard at Field House, London on 10-13 & 25 February and 9 September 2014.

[62] Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Taliban, Islamic State, and many others are examples of violent insurgencies using violent psychosocial trauma to prevent the government from governing effectively and to weaponize the surviving population.

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a SNA/AMISOM-controlled Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab had upped its attacking government and affiliated personnel, with substantial collateral damage among civilians." [63]

United States Army Doctrine on Unconventional Warfare, practiced by 'Green Beret' Special Forces organizations, describes luring government forces into attacking their own population by just such tactics as Al-Shabaab uses in Mogadishu.[64] When the intentionality of Al-Shabaab's efforts to create violent psychosocial trauma within the population by instigating government forces to attack their own population is understood, the value of the population segments – majority and minority – to the violent extremist insurgency becomes clear. The first task is to break the population psychologically and sociologically through violent acts that the government either participates in or is unable to prevent. This requires special types of recruits who can be broken sufficiently to commit a suicidal attack on demand. This, is the psychological warfare aspect of unconventional warfare, otherwise known as violent insurgency. By its very purpose of turning the entire citizenry into weapons against each other to defeat governance; and then turning the population segments against the government as revolution, such warfare can be characterized as 'extreme' regardless of the body of cognitive ideas that it employs to give structure and purpose it its operations. For malign authoritarian states, the creation of these conditions prevents healthy segments of society from coalescing in opposition to the authoritarian government.[65] This end state of chaos in the psychosocial traumatization of a population should be understood as a 'Creative Process' for the VEO like Al-Shabaab. This end state results in or creates the largest possible pool of resources in terms of psychologically damaged humans with which to recruit as kamikaze fighters, suicide weapons, and monopolized labour pools for organizational wealth generation. To achieve such end states, VEOs seek to turn population segments against each other. Marginalized communities' suffering must be enhanced to threaten their survival if they are to be induced into attacking other segments. Marginalized communities such as the Bajuni are the easiest to threaten their survival because they are without an adequate social safety net (Diyah) and are the most vulnerable. The goal is to take the Somali society apart faster than the western backed Somali government can build it, and the employment of young, marginalized men with dashed aspirations of escaping Somalia, would fit nicely within the planning and programming cycle of Al-Shabaab.

VEO Weaponisation of Civil Society into Violent Extremism. The description of exiled interviewees' homelife and the circumstances surrounding Al Shabaab's attempted recruitment varies from those experienced by other Somalis. In some cases, an organisational splinter of this VEO simply abduct their targets, as previous decisions have noted, citing the USSD's 2019 Country Report of Human Rights Practices. Other Al Shabaab segments, raid schools and madrassas to procure children for indoctrination, training, and employment as human weapons in either a kamikaze or suicidal manner. Underlying all of the various Al Shabaab groups' efforts is the intentional 'harassment and coercion' of clan elders and parents fit to disrupt and breakdown normal social authority. This breakdown of family social authority allows the VEO to replace it with their own malformed version of social authority. These types of inexplicable behaviour by Al Shabaab and other violent extremist organisations creates doubt and uncertainty within the immigration courts and tribunals, who attempt to ascertain the veracity of claims to asylum. The underlying operational motivation of Al Shabaab members is psychological as much or more than it is physical. The goal is to malform and deform the psychosocial identity of the Somali family unit into weaponised material. The graphic aids in figures 7 & 8 offer a sort of guide to understanding how VEOs like Al Shabaab, turn human families and societies into weapons. They intentionally employ acts and messaging to induce violent psychosocial trauma into the minds of families and their members. A father is approached and asked to choose between his two sons, which one will he sacrifice to save the other? If the father refuses, he is told they will both die. By forcing the father to choose, they psychologically break his mind and induce extreme self-guilt for having chosen one son or the other. Alternate variations include:

- Father made to choose between his wife or his daughter to be taken as a 'temporary' bride by the fighters (meaning days of rapes). Failure to choose sentences both mother and daughter to death.

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[63] (McCloskey, 2014)

[64] United States Army Field Manual 3-05.201, Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations, dated April 2003, and restricted to US Army Special Operations Command Personnel.

[65] Uganda, Iran, and Sudan are some examples of malign states using violent psychosocial trauma to keep their populations' aspirations in check.

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- Father made to choose between giving his early teenage daughter to be a 'temporary' bride or receiving his share of the humanitarian (food supply) (medicine) (water) (fill in the blank) necessary to save his remaining children. Failure to choose sentences all his family to death.

It doesn't matter which choice the father makes, both will result in his own psychological disintegration and the enraged hatred of his remaining family members for not being strong enough, wise enough, or 'fill in the blank' to save his family. And this is the entire point of Al Shabaab's operation, which cannot be easily understood using rational actor political science lenses of analysis. The only question was whether the Al-Shabaab leader could coerce the child's father into participating in the decision to create a psychosocial cleavage within the family and extended clan/village over choosing personal safety instead of protecting loved ones. Al-

Figure 10 Information Graphic illustrating the psychosocial mechanisms of inducing trauma into civil societies as a prelude to their weaponization.

Shabaab lost this ability to break down the family when they were unable to coerce his father to surrender his son. Their goal was not to kill the father, but the creation of alienation, shame, and rage against their own impotence and breakdown of mandatory male masculine archetypes of defense of loved ones. This was and is, the principal goal of Al-Shabaab and all violent extremist organizations; to breakdown love, trust, nurturance, as part of their weaponization[66] of civil society. The information graphics in figures 7 & 8 offers a glimpse into the world of violent extremists and their intuitive capacity to break families and communities using intentional psychosocial trauma as a pathway to extremizing mental capacity and radicalizing accompanying behaviour. The quote by Charlotte Bronte offers an insight into the dystopian mindset of violent extremist ideology employed by sociopathic or psychopathic leaders of these organizations to create weapons out of civilian population segments for personal profit and accrual of social control.[67] The VEOs use of violence and threats of violence against families incite alienating ideations of victimization, which in turn, conjugate to deep shame within the cognitive minds of the family members, to include the fathers who allowed themselves to be coerced into destroying their family.[68] The alienation, shame, and subsequent anger/rage works to break apart the family making it easier for Al-Shabaab to recruit the broken pieces into fighters, logistical and intelligence supporters, and hiding cover in their society.[69]

Breaking down the recruitment target. The asylum claimant, Mr. Saleh's narrative illustrates how VEOs like Al-Shabaab work to psychologically break down individuals for recruitment. In the previous section, we illustrated how VEOs work to turn fathers against children and children against father by placing family members in impossible dilemmas. Choose son or daughter but one dies or is taken. Either choice breaks the family and the VEO recruiters then pick up the damaged pieces for use on the terror battlefield. If or when Mr. Saleh is returned to Mogadishu and reclaimed by his Al Shabaab pursuers, the same type of psychological attacks will be inflicted against him. They
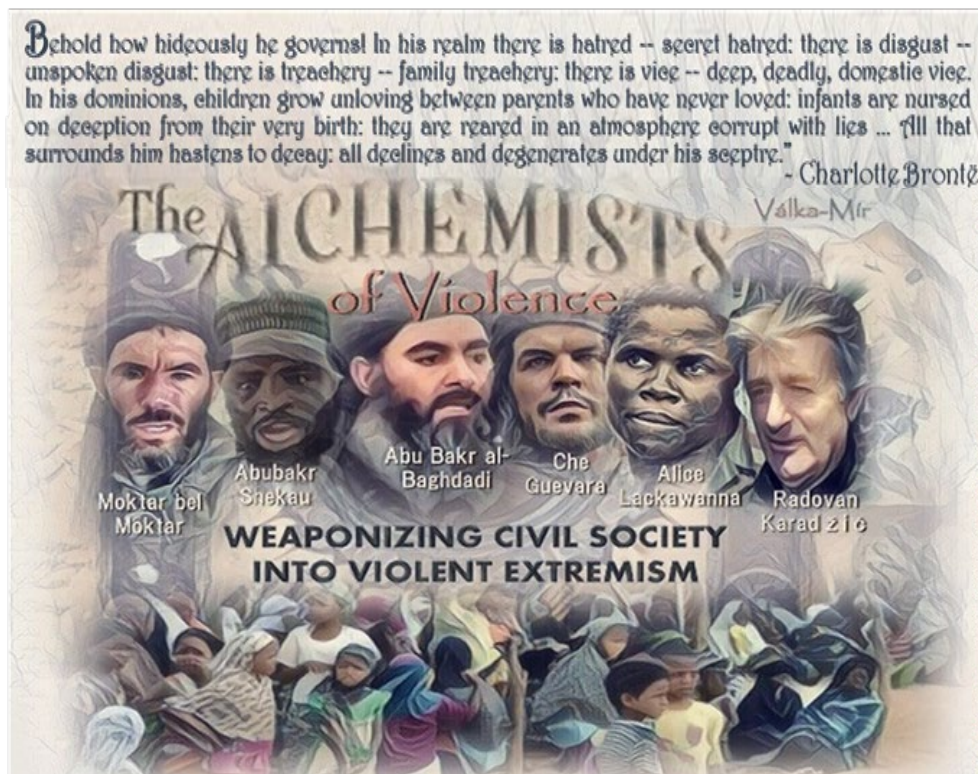
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[66] E.g., creation of kamikaze fighters and suicidal weapons out of children, women, and mentally broken men.

[67] Information graphic drawn from Valka-Mir's textbook, Psychological and Partisan Warfare, a non-public text used by USA, UK, CAN, and NATO militaries to combat state and non-state actors working to dismantle the Westphalian system of state and governance.

[68] (Hill, 2010)

[69] (Mukhtar, 1996; Samad, 2021; Waal, 1997)

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will help him understand that he murdered his father by not accepting his destiny with Al Shabaab. He will be given a choice between saving his uncle or killing him by his refusal to submit. There will be nothing that they care to know from Mr. Saleh, they will simply try to break him down using psychological torture; constant threats of being killed; use of sensory deprivation, and torture. Breaking down and weaponizing Mr. Saleh would have the effect of breaking up the close-knit community of Bajuni families. But for this to work, a loved and or respected member of the community needed to be turned; broken and induced to betray his community for self-survival or survival of loved ones. This is how psychological warfare is conducted by violent extremist organisations, state, and non-state actors. There is no actual truth required here and the reality that Al Shabaab works to inflict on the population need not be real. The intentional breaking of the minds and realities of civilian families through violence and the infliction of psychosocial trauma, is not an exact science, and we see a great deal of experimentation in our field research. The mistake made by international governance such as the UN, AU, ECOWAS, NATO, USA, etc, is first the failure to recognise what the VEOs are actually doing as opposed to perceived to be doing and why, followed by thinking a short-term gain is an indicator of future success.[70]

Psychological Warfare in practice in Somalia. The psychological landscape of violent conflict involves the intentional disintegration of a family's reality. UK Home Office investigators, have, in the past, reasoned that *"it is considered implausible that Al Shabaab, a sophisticated terrorist organisation,* [an asylum claimant] *to leave their area of control when they desired to forcibly recruit…*them."*[71]* This 'sophisticated terrorist organisation' is not trying to build a better Somalia, but rather a dystopian malformed collective of damaged individuals, families, and communities that can be easily weaponised against targets on demand. Al Shabaab is a sophisticated terrorist organisation, but not in the same way that a partisan organisation operated during WW2. Al Shabaab does not need to build anything. It just needs to destroy. Al Shabaab does not need to protect the population, only to inflict pain and suffering on them to create ungovernable populations that are deeply traumatised and turned inward against each other in alienated shame and rage. The Home Office objections to the asylum claims of Somali teens and young adults are not merely naïve but reflect a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the Al Shabaab violent extremist organisation. The only limits to what VEOs such as Al Shabaab can try is their own pathological past experiences and twisted imagination. This is central to understanding the claims of asylum by the refugees fleeing the violence when their narratives about Al Shabaab seem so irrational; their objective is to break the minds of their targeted audience – the nuclear and extended family. To understand how Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda have managed to turn Somalia into multi-generational nightmare, you must first understand the family generally, and in Mr. Saleh's case, the Somali family specifically. The Somali family exists as the principal physical, social, psychological, and emotional reality for Somali clan life in the cities and in the rural villages. VEOs like Al-Shabaab work to break up the family's realities of love, nurture, protection, safety, and normalcy. This intentional breaking of the family's reality is called psychosocial trauma. It works by replacing the safety of the home with the shock of explosions, home invasions, abductions, and placing family members in impossible dilemmas where they are forced to choose between loved ones who are killed or saved. No matter the choice made, the damage is done to the family member's mind and their future relationship with those who survived and those who did not. The mental and emotional connection between family and village is replaced by guilt and competition over physical survival. For children, the needed control over their physical environment and body is lost; replaced by anxiety, panic, and terror from the loss of that psychological control. Our research and analysis suggest that the trauma conditions of families caught in conflict, often experience fight-or-flight responses to the chaos around them [72] Family members who are unable to fight or flee, eventually succumb to a type of inescapable shock, a traumatic condition of sociological failure that is characterized by apathy, hopelessness, fatigue, and interior withdrawal into themselves. As the individual family members withdraw, so too does the family into *"a kind of protective envelope, a place of mute, aching loneliness, in which [their experiences are] treated as a solitary burden that needs to be expunged by*

[70] (Minority Rights Group International, 2023; "No. 5563. Somalia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Labour Organisation, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization and World Meteorological Organization," 2019; Odenwald et al., 2007a; Wam, 2005)

[71] UK Home Office asylum teams' previous reasoning for denial of Somali asylum claim.

[72] Christian, Patrick J. (2018) Qualitative Research in the Shadow of Violent Conflict, in *Experiences in Researching Conflict and Violence: Fieldwork Interrupted,* Editors: Rivas, Althea-Maria; Browne, Brendan Ciaran, Policy Press, Bristol UK (pp 31-46).

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acts of denial and resistance" of the reality of their situation. [73] Families and eventually become induced into a state of learned helplessness, which makes controlling them and weaponizing them much simpler for the VEOs [74] All the interactions between Mr. Saleh and Al-Shabaab are meaningless if one does not understand their underlying intent; to compromise the claimant's sense of honour and duty to family and clan. To place him in an impossible dilemma where he must choose between two loves to save one. This is how VEOs break and recruit to build and rebuild their army of kamikaze fighters and suicide weapons. Somali social life is highly interconnected and the movements of individuals into and through, other family-clans neighbourhoods, villages, and towns, causes interest, comment, notice. Eventually, that notice, and comment will reach the ears of Al Shabaab members working to operationalise the broad guidance they receive from the formal part of the organisation. Ultimately, all of Somali civil life is at risk of notice and action. Al Shabaab is perhaps one of the most durable Islamic-

Figure 11 VEO Maxim: First Break the Mind, then Recruit

oriented violent extremist organisations. It is impossible to overstate the risk from Al-Shabaab to Somalia's citizens. As an affiliate Violent Extremist Organisation of Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab conducts a type of warfare called 'Psychological Warfare' whose purpose is to turn a civil population into warring factions that are uncontrollable by any normal government. Al-Shabaab's application of psychological warfare works to psychologically break, emotional extremise, and behaviourally radicalise as many Somali men, women, and children as possible. The collective of damaged humans, then, are turned against other humans to increase their numbers exponentially. The killings, marketplace bombing, and terrorising actions are called "Psychological Acts" or "PsyActs" whose primary purpose is not to kill, but to create extreme mental trauma by turning normal healthy people into agonized, suffering, victims of loss; children, spouses, parents, siblings, and all manner of extended family. The resulting human debris, suffering victims, becomes the recruits after they are further extremised through deepening of their guilt, grief, pain, and anguish. When they are at the point of suicide, that is when they are most ready for recruitment, tactical training, and employment as kamikaze or suicide weapons. Now, the 18-year-long African Union Mission to stabilise Somalia has ended in failure and the AU is scheduled to depart a little more than 3 months from now. The expectation is that Al-Shabaab will take control of the country as an Al-Qaeda state, much like the Islamic State of the Levant and Syria.

The Western Exhaustion with Somalia. After 18 years of battling Somalia's organic Islamic violent extremist insurgency, The African Union and its contributing troop nations and financial support partners, have decided to leave. Established in 2007, the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), previously known as the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), has withdrawn more than 22,000 troops from Uganda, Burundi and neighbouring Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. [75] Thousands of people have died from al-Shabaab attacks including bombings, complex attacks, kidnaping, extortion, illegal executions, murders, and assassinations. [76] Their attacks occur in all parts of Somalia including the capital Mogadishu, which was at one time, taken over by this VEO, assassinating senior state officials, and even forcing the security forces to beat strategic retreats. As part of the transition process in 2023, ATMIS withdrew 5,000 of its troops from Somalia and handed over 13 military bases to the Somali Security Forces during the first and second phases of the drawdown concluded last year. The

In a dusty military compound in Somalia's coastal town of Adale, soldiers from the African Union peacekeeping force and the Somali National Army gathered in a makeshift building. The AU commander gave signed documents to his Somali counterpart, marking the handing over of the military base, approximately 150km from Mogadishu, to the Somali Army. Since the beginning of June, similar ceremonies have been taking place at military bases across Somalia. These ceremonies come as the African Union (AU) is winding down its peacekeeping mission in the country, leading to concerns about what will happen when AU soldiers finally depart at the end of 2024.

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[73] Erikson, Kai (1995) Notes on Trauma and Community in *Trauma, Explorations in Memory* Editor Kai Erikson, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, (pp 183-199) (p. 186).

[74] What we know about learned helplessness is drawn from early experiments conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s by psychologists Martin Seligman and Steven Maier, using human and animal experiments.

[75] My field combat experience in Somalia was as a combat advisor to the Ethiopian Counter Terrorist Brigade in 2005. We worked with the Somali National Army to map out Al Shabaab's early structural and organizational growth, especially their long-term planning for infecting the Somali leadership, clans, and key financial influencers in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Djibouti, and Khartoum.

[76] (Banafunzi, 2020; Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1995, 2012; Maruf, 2018)

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final 4,000 ATMIS troops will be withdrawn at the end of June 2024 and the ATMIS will formally terminate later this year in December.[77]

Unfortunately for Somali citizens, Al-Shabaab retains the ability to carry out asymmetrical attacks against civilians, civilian infrastructure, and state institutions. On 11 January 2024, Al-Shabaab fired several mortars targeting the Aden Adde International Airport area in Mogadishu, which houses the UN compound. The attack resulted in the death of a Ugandan military personnel member deployed with the UN's Guard Unit. [78] Al-Shabaab militants continued to launch attacks against security forces and civilians across several regions. In February, the militant group adopted a new tactic to target an Emirati-run military base in Mogadishu by infiltrating its forces into the base, killing at least 18 soldiers. The attack, which is not the first one staged by the militant group in Somalia, highlights the Somali security forces' vulnerability and inability to deter al-Shabaab's sophisticated attacks. [79] In just a 30-day period in supposedly safe Somalia (20 January to 23 February 2024) the nonprofit research collective, ACLED, recorded more than 250 political violence events and at least 470 reported fatalities. Much of the violent attacks were centred in Lower Shabelle region, where al-Shabaab launched attacks targeting Somali security forces and ATMIS forces. The most common event type was battles, with over 130 events, followed by explosions or remote violence, with 88 events. Nearly half of the battle events consisted of armed clashes between security forces and al-Shabaab and the remainder were against civilian targets and armed tribal militias.[80]

> *"Though we appreciate AU force's efforts, back then when they were deployed, we were hopeful that they would bring stability across the country since civilians, especially the women and children, have mostly suffered the conflict, but unfortunately, nothing much has changed."* - Ms Batulo Ahmed – Chair of Somali Women's Association.[81]

Al-Shabab is one of Africa's deadliest armed organisations and is sponsored and supported by both Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, with significant external funding, often redirected from previous tranches of international aid. My research and analysis indicate that Al Shabaab has recently been avoiding active combat with the African Union and SNA joint forces, ahead of the expected withdrawal. Instead, the Al Shabaab organisational entities have been adapting and employing night combat tactics and increased use of suicide bombing. The group continues to maintain competitive and effective administrative control over local populations in south-central Somalia which the Somali National Government has not been able to penetrate nor has it been able to even to fully ascertain.

> *"Somalia's national army are in no position to take over responsibilities in the foreseeable future, the main reason being the lack of an agreed national security architecture, and when there is consensus, we lack a unified national army, as the regular army is now mostly clan militias,"* Saleh Mubarak, chairman of the Hiraal Institute.[82]

A January 2023 report by the Heritage Institute, a Mogadishu-based think tank, revealed that more than two-thirds of the Somali government's $950m annual budget comes from external donors, which poses a question of readiness and whether Mogadishu can afford its own national security.[83] Experts say the timetable set by the UN Security Council is too ambitious since Somalia's forces are unlikely to be fully autonomous by then, nor is it likely that al-Shabab will be defeated militarily.

> *"The Somali security sector has certainly progressed over the years, but it remains an open question if they can fully take over locations vacated by AU forces and have the resources to sustain their presence, including logistically. The Somali security forces are still developing as they simultaneously fight Al-Shabaab and try to hold territory* [regained by the African Union troops].*"* Omar Mahmood, Somali researcher for International Crisis Group. [84]

Despite the massive investments in time, energy, and resources, the security situation in Somalia remains precarious, with civilians facing daily threats, targeted killings, and infrastructure damage from Al-Shabaab and various inter-clan conflicts. An example of the growing conflict between clans is the increasing violence

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[77] (Collective ACLED Staff, 2024; Mwachinalo, 2024; Organisational Staff, 2024; Warsameh, 2023; WN/as/APA, 2024)

[78] Ibid

[79] (Collective ACLED Staff, 2024)

[80] The Mudug region had the highest number of reported fatalities, with at least 144 recorded during the reporting period. Lower Juba region followed, with 78 reported fatalities. This is due to clashes between security forces and al-Shabaab militants in Galmudug state.

[81] – Al Jazeera (Warsameh, 2023)

[82] Mogadishu-based security think tank as reported by Al Jazeera. (Warsameh, 2023)

[83] Ibid (Damon, 2012)

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between the Dhulbahante Clan Militias of the Somali National Army and the Somaliland security forces, with a sharp increase in human rights violations. The security situation there in Las Anod, the capital of Sool region has deteriorated since 2023, and we have recorded the killing of 81 civilians and least 410 people injured, while approximately 200,000 have been displaced. The seemingly intractability of violence in Somalia can never be separated from the psychosocial-emotional relationships of the Somali Clans, subclans, and families in which collective identity is formed, preserved, and enshrined in memorialisation. The Somali government and its SNA are, competitors to, not protectors of this ancient system of human life. Until the Somali government in Mogadishu adapts to this reality, the violence and human fuel that powers Al Shabaab will not end. One measure of effectiveness that marks the failure of the Somali government to bridge the Tribal Political System of Somalia society with the larger world around them is the ratification of key international and regional women's rights treaties and accompanying domestic legislation that repeals *"discriminatory laws against women and girls"*.[85] Simply stated, the Somali government in Mogadishu does not possess the necessary legitimacy and acceptance by the general population to even begin having these discussions, never mind changing centuries of patriarchal realities.

During the calendar year 2024, the military forces of the African Union will complete their withdrawal and the security of Somalia will be turned over to the Somali Government and its Somali National Army by December of 2024.[86] While the Somali Army has had some successes, such as finally retaking the town of Haradheer this past year, the tribal militias did most of the fighting there[87]and in other places as well.[88] Throughout the tenure of AMISOM and ATMIS, the Somali National Army has been used as a "by-with-through' host-nation partner force with the UN, US, AL, AU, peacekeepers who were/are under tremendous pressure to build up the SNA in order to withdraw.[89] This has led to the common attribution of success from the foreign peacekeeping forces and tribal militias onto the SNA, offering the Somali government a false understanding of their security capacity and offering a face-saving way out for the foreign peacekeepers. The foreign peacekeepers have traditionally focused on concreate objectives, such as retaking a town or defending a military base, leaving the traditional work of securing the countryside, the populations, and securing the hearts and minds of the people to the Somali National Army. The SNA, however, has never had the capacity nor inclination to even understand the population, never mind winning them over. All the available research data suggests that the Somali government and its Somali National Army (SNA) are not able to defeat Al Shabaab, halt its violence, and interfere with its access and control over the Somali population in Mogadishu or any other location that is supposedly under control of the SNA. This includes control and security of the SNA bases in Mogadishu and elsewhere. After the last troops of the African Union leave Somalia, the SNA will face Al Shabaab and the Islamic State alone.[90] The rather lengthy reasoning section below builds on the previous §6 to illustrate what we expect will occur once this withdrawal is complete. To be clear, Mogadishu is not in a secure state of living from the protection of Somali Security Forces. The evidence the I have presented above and below, suggests that the Southern Somali region controlled by the Somali National Army will again recede into the close protection of the National Government and its ethnic clan-based units will respond to tribal demands of protection, leaving populated urban areas and ethnic areas at the mercy of Al Shabaab. This was the situation in South Somalia prior to the intervention of the United Nations and African Union deployment peacekeepers.

The Somali army had been expanding its "anti-al-Shabaab" efforts from beyond Hirshabelle state, and they were now beginning to strike at al-Shabaab bases in Galmudug state where Haradheer is located. The army cooperated with local Gedir clan militias and drone strikes from the United States in Mudug, seizing the towns of Harardhere and Galcad in January as a result. Al-Shabaab was reported to begin increasing its usage of IEDs when fighting, while also targeting civilians for attacks. The group was also reported to be targeting drug dealers and robbers in Mogadishu, in an apparent drive to gain support for the group in the city. To be clear, Al Shabaab

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[85] Security Council Report Feb 2024

[86] (Damon, 2012) (Staff reporter, 2022)

[87] (Editor, 2023; Khalif, 2023)

[88] (Hassan, 2020; ODP Staff, 2015)

[89] (AU Press Office, 2014; AU UN IST, 2014; Hassan, 2020; Staff, 2020a)

[90] The exact relationship between the Islamic State in Somalia and Al Shabaab is not clear as they often share the same fighters, and the former grew out of the latter. For the purposes of this report, I have included Islamic State with Al Shabaab. Either way, both are murderously dangerous.

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has lost a third of its territory in Somalia since the government and its African Union allies launched its latest major military offensive in August 2022. Al Shabaab is carefully observing as the African Union has been giving up bases to the Somali Armed Forces since June of 2023, as it prepares to end its peacekeeping mission in the country and AU soldiers will finally depart at the end of 2024. Unfortunately for Somali citizens, Al-Shabaab retains the ability to carry out asymmetrical attacks against civilians, civilian infrastructure, and state institutions. On 11 January 2024, Al-Shabaab fired several mortars targeting the Aden Adde International Airport area in Mogadishu, which houses the UN compound. The attack resulted in the death of a Ugandan military personnel member deployed with the UN's Guard Unit.[91] Al-Shabaab militants continued to launch attacks against security forces and civilians across several regions. In February, the militant group adopted a new tactic to target an Emirati-run military base in Mogadishu by infiltrating its forces into the base, killing at least 18 soldiers. The attack, which is not the first one staged by the militant group in Somalia, highlights the Somali security forces' vulnerability and inability to deter al-Shabaab's sophisticated attacks.[92] In just a 30-day period in supposedly safe Somalia (20 January to 23 February 2024) the non-profit research collective, ACLED, recorded more than 250 political violence events and at least 470 reported fatalities. Much of the violent attacks were centred in Lower Shabelle region, where al-Shabaab launched attacks targeting Somali security forces and ATMIS forces. The most common event type was battles, with over 130 events, followed by explosions or remote violence, with 88 events. Nearly half of the battle events consisted of armed clashes between security forces and al-Shabaab and the remainder were against civilian targets and armed tribal militias.[93]

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Al-Shabab is one of Africa's deadliest armed organisations and is sponsored and supported by both Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, with significant external funding, often redirected from previous tranches of international aid. My research and analysis indicate that Al Shabaab has recently been avoiding active combat with the African Union and SNA joint forces, ahead of the expected withdrawal. Instead, the Al Shabaab organisational entities have been adapting and employing night combat tactics and increased use of suicide bombing. The group continues to maintain competitive and effective administrative control over local populations in south-central Somalia which the Somali National Government has not been able to penetrate nor has it been able to even to fully ascertain.

> *"Somalia's national army are in no position to take over responsibilities in the foreseeable future, the main reason being the lack of an agreed national security architecture, and when there is*

Sample activities of Al Shabaab in 2022.

12 January: Car bomb killed eight people and wounded another nine outside the Mogadishu International Airport, a facility which hosts the United States Embassy and other diplomatic offices. The group said via a radio address that a convoy of "white officials" had been the target of the bombing.

19 February: Suicide in the city of Beledweyne kills 14 people.

23 March: Armed attacks in Mogadishu and Beledweyne. Politicians Amina Mohamed Abdi and Hassan Dhuhul among killed.

03 May: 30 soldiers of the African Union, including 10 Burundian soldiers, killed by al-Shabaab militants during attack against African Union military base near the village of Ceel Baraf, about 100 miles north of Mogadishu.

20 July: Al-Shabaab launches invasion of Ethiopia with at least 1,500 militants, capture a town, advanced up to 150 kilometres (93 mi), and inflicted heavy losses on the Ethiopian Army.

19 August: Al-Shabaab militants attack hotel in Mogadishu, kill 21 people, wound 100+.

Sample activities of Al Shabaab in 2023.

May 26: Al-Shabaab launches deadly attack on the African Union Military Base at Buulo Mareer located 120 kilometers southwest of Mogadishu using Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices and suicide bombers, killing 54 Ugandan soldiers.

30 May Al-Shabaab attacks base near the town of Masagaway.

On 17 September it was reported that 200+ Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) fighters were killed/captured by al-Shabaab fighters in Rabdhure, Bakool.[205]

29 September a suicide bomber exploded a bomb in a tea shop in Mogadishu.

Sample activities of Al Shabaab in 2024.

10 January: Al-Shabaab militants attacked a UN helicopter and forced it to make an emergency landing. They then burned the helicopter and seized most of the crew of nine people. One person was killed and two others were unaccounted for after the incident.

06 February: Al Shabaab conducts four bombings inside Bakaara Market in Mogadishu kill at least ten people and injured ~ fifteen others.

11 February: Al-Shabaab attacks the General Gordon Military Base in the Somali capital Mogadishu, resulting in deaths of four Emirati troops and one Bahraini military officer.

14 March, militants attacked and sieged the YSL Hotel in Mogadishu.

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[91] Ibid
[92] (Collective ACLED Staff, 2024)
[93] The Mudug region had the highest number of reported fatalities, with at least 144 recorded during the reporting period. Lower Juba region followed, with 78 reported fatalities. This is due to clashes between security forces and al-Shabaab militants in Galmudug state.
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consensus, we lack a unified national army, as the regular army is now militias," Mohamed Mubarak, chairman of the Hiraal Institute.[95]   *mostly   clan*

A January 2023 report by the Heritage Institute, a Mogadishu-based think tank, revealed that more than two-thirds of the Somali government's $950m annual budget comes from external donors, which poses a question of readiness and whether Mogadishu can afford its own national security.[96] Experts say the timetable set by the UN Security Council is too ambitious since Somalia's forces are unlikely to be fully autonomous by then, nor is it likely that al-Shabab will be defeated militarily.

> *"The Somali security sector has certainly progressed over the years, but it remains an open question if they can fully take over locations vacated by AU forces and have the resources to sustain their presence, including logistically. The Somali security forces are still developing as they simultaneously fight Al-Shabaab and try to hold territory* [regained by the African Union troops]*."* Omar Mahmood, Somali researcher for International Crisis Group. [97]

Despite the massive investments in time, energy, and resources, the security situation in Somalia remains precarious, with civilians facing daily threats, targeted killings, and infrastructure damage from Al-Shabaab and various inter-clan conflicts. An example of the growing conflict between clans is the increasing violence between the Dhulbahante Clan Militias of the Somali National Army and the Somaliland security forces, with a sharp increase in human rights violations. The security situation there in Las Anod, the capital of Sool region has actually deteriorated since 2023, and we have recorded the killing of 81 civilians and least 410 people injured, while approximately 200,000 have been displaced. The seemingly intractability of violence in Somalia can never be separated from the psychosocial-emotional relationships of the Somali Clans, subclans, and families in which collective identity is formed, preserved, and enshrined in memorialisation. The Somali government and its SNA are, competitors to, not protectors of this ancient system of human life. Until the Somali government in Mogadishu adapts to this reality, the violence and human fuel that powers Al Shabaab will not end. One measure of effectiveness that marks the failure of the Somali government to bridge the Tribal Political System of Somalia society with the larger world around them is the ratification of key international and regional women's rights treaties and accompanying domestic legislation that repeals "discriminatory laws against women and girls".[98]

Over the past 19 years, I have participated in international conferences involving the Security of the south Somali state and the purported progress being made. After each major proclamation of security advancements, the insurgent, violent, extremist, terrorist-ideological organisation would break up these idealistic pronouncements with death, dismemberment, and destruction. In every year of this conflict, our research has proven that the government cannot even protect itself and its own officials and military formations never mind low level civilians.[99] Al-Shabaab kills top military leaders of the Somali National Army and attacks the country's presidential palace with impunity.[100] Al-Shabaab overruns AU and USA bases nearly as soon as they are turned over to the Somali National Army.[101] This is why the large clans have been forced to build their own clan militias. Ms. Haashi's narrative illustrates the lengths that ordinary Somali civilians must resort to in order to remain out of the immediate entanglement of the government and Al-Shabaab. These are two competing governments at murderous odds with each other and every civilian without a weapon is caught in the crossfire, susceptible to violent coercion. The African Union's Mission in Somalia has mandated its conclusion and is in the process of drawing down with a withdrawal date of December 2024.[102] The Somali government has had little success fighting an insurgency and winning public support.

> *"The war in Somalia is a multifaceted conflict, where shifting loyalties are a norm. The conflict, which has become entrenched into what many describe as a forever war, has claimed countless civilian lives. A sense of uncertainty*

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[95] Mogadishu-based security think tank as reported by Al Jazeera. (Warsameh, 2023)

[96] ibid

[97] (Collective ACLED Staff, 2024; Mwachinalo, 2024; Organisational Staff, 2024)

[98] Security Council Report Feb 2024

[99] (Staff, 2018a)

[100] (Staff, 2018a; Weiss, 2018)

[101] (Maruf, 2018; Staff, 2018b; Watson et al., 2011)

[102] (Staff reporter, 2022)

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prevails over the country as foreign forces begin their withdrawal from Somalia, slated to be completed by December 2024. Originally deployed in 2007, the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) was sent into Somalia to prop up the fragile Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and ward off the various factions and splinter groups – most notably Al-Shabab."[103]

Around 3,000 foreign troops serving under the ATMIS coalition will withdraw from Somalia by the end of this month. Already, 2,000 foreign troops serving under ATMIS withdrew from Somalia as of late June, handing over vacated military bases and control to the Somali army. Yet just days after the first phase of the withdrawal, Al-Shabab seized the town of Geriley, which had been vacated by Kenyan forces a few days prior. Geriley, only 12 km from the Kenyan border, remains under Al-Shabab control today. The events in Geriley not only serve as a warning of the fate that may await many towns, districts, and cities in Somalia once foreign boots permanently leave Somali soil, but they also illustrate how fluid the situation is on the ground. Somalia's security apparatus is extremely fragile and dependent on external support, namely from the West. Despite the billions spent by the international community, Somali security forces struggle to hold ground, utilise their gains and are oftentimes in a state of disarray and divided along clan lines. This could be a recipe for disaster.

Over the past 19 years, I have participated in international conferences involving the Security of the south Somali state and the purported progress being made. After each major proclamation of security advancements, the insurgent, violent, extremist, terrorist-ideological organisation would break up these idealistic pronouncements with death, dismemberment, and destruction. In every year of this conflict, our research has proven that the government cannot even protect itself and its own officials and military formations never mind low level civilians.[104] Al-Shabaab kills top military leaders of the Somali National Army and attacks the country's presidential palace with impunity.[105] Al-Shabaab overruns AU and USA bases nearly as soon as they are turned over to the Somali National Army.[106] This is why the large clans have been forced to build their own clan militias. Mr. Saleh's narrative illustrates the lengths that ordinary Somali civilians must resort to in order to remain out of the immediate entanglement of the government and Al-Shabaab. These are two competing governments at murderous odds with each other and every civilian without a weapon is caught in the crossfire, susceptible to violent coercion. The African Union's Mission in Somalia has mandated its conclusion and is in the process of drawing down with a withdrawal date of December 2024.[107] The Somali government has had little success fighting an insurgency and winning public support.

> *"The war in Somalia is a multifaceted conflict, where shifting loyalties are a norm. The conflict, which has become entrenched into what many describe as a forever war, has claimed countless civilian lives. A sense of uncertainty prevails over the country as foreign forces begin their withdrawal from Somalia, slated to be completed by December 2024. Originally deployed in 2007, the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) was sent into Somalia to prop up the fragile Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and ward off the various factions and splinter groups – most notably Al-Shabab."[108]*

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[103] (Musoma, 2021)
[104] (Staff, 2018a)
[105] (Staff, 2018a; Weiss, 2018)
[106] (Maruf, 2018; Staff, 2018b; Watson et al., 2011)
[107] (Staff reporter, 2022)
[108] (Musoma, 2021)

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Life in Mogadishu as a minority caste/ethnicity IDP. Security and safety in Mogadishu are matters of who you are, who you belong to, and your connection to the UN/AU supported government or western supported NGOs. In Somalia, an individual's ethnic and or caste affiliation determines survival. Socially disconnected IDPs are not often successful in seeking assistance from the clan organized government ministries.[109] Even if a refugee is assigned to an IDP camp run by NGOs, he would be in the hands of local Somalis from recognized clans who would involuntarily avoid him, imprinted as they are against outcast ethnics and castes. He would not be afforded life support by any community in Mogadishu and would likely risk serious injury if he tried. Finally, there is no organized or capable community of the various outsider castes in Mogadishu to support those in displacement. Simply put, they are on their own without the capacity to survive. It may be possible for an IDP to survive if he were taken in by a humanitarian NGO as a staff member, but NGOs are constantly besieged with applicants and local NGO staff operate in the same manner as described above; family, kin, and clan networks control who gets economic benefits and survives. The remainder move, become refugees, or are recruited by VEO or criminal organizations which weaponize them through trauma to psychological extremism and behavioural radicalization sufficient to be of temporary (suicidal) or long term (fighter) value.[110] In Mogadishu, there are government ministries for refugees and humanitarian action. But what little capacity they have is absorbed by the nearly 100,000 residents that have fled their homes in search of food, water, and pasture for livestock. "Across the country, the number of people who need assistance and protection is forecast to rise by 30 per cent, from 5.9 million to about 7.7 million in 2022. Over 70 per cent of all Somalis live below the poverty line."[111] As bad as conditions inside Mogadishu are for members of socially disconnected IDPs are, conditions for this community outside of Mogadishu are even less hospitable. The ongoing drought in the lower Shabelle region of south Somalia has made survival there difficult even for favoured clans.[112] Tens of thousands of families are in transit to refugee locations at any given time and thousands more are desperately fighting over dwindling water holes trying keep human and animal alive. In the areas outside of Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab's shadow governance covertly or overtly control many of the towns from Ba'lad in the north to Barawa on the coast and Jilib in middle Juba. Towns like Barawa, Sablale, and Janale are in open contest between the SNA and Al-Shabaab. In-between, local militias fielded by clans without alignment to government or VEO, roam the countryside and are a threat to anyone who is not supposed to be in that clan's communal areas.[113] Civilians can move outside of Mogadishu only with the permission of the clans that control the area they are moving in.[114] The inter-relationship between violent extremist organizations like Al-Shabaab and the civilian population that they work to break and weaponize is incredibly complex. Many of the VEO cadre that terrorise the countryside, were themselves, forcibly recruited, broken, and weaponized. This cycle of creating victims only to create perpetrators for employment can be, and is now, a self-sustaining engine of conflict with a logic of violence that is little understood by the western societies trying to intervene. A primary characteristic of this cycle of victimization-creation and perpetration-employment is that it involves the purposeful creation of subconscious trauma that alters the reality of the traumatized person. Traumatized persons may appear to act irrationally to the untraumatized. But their actions are fully rational to the subconscious mind as it operates within its own damaged reality. What makes Al-Shabaab and other VEOs so dangerous is that it and they, are not like western security formations with tight command and control, supervision, and obedience to directives.[115] Because the conditions for VEO epidemiology involve the deliberate traumatization of human communities through inflicted violence, the danger is that even if the VEO wins, as in the case of Afghanistan, the brushfire of traumatization continues to engulf the population because it takes on a life of its own.[116] The motivations and actions of weaponized civilians employed by VEOs like Al-Shabaab can only be understood through the analytical lenes of anthropologically curated psychology, not through analytical lenses of political or military science.[117] The technical reports listed in this report provide a wealth of social science research on the functioning of weaponized human beings that are created and employed by violent extremist organizations.

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[109] (Karr & Von Fischer, 2024)
[110] (Christian, 2020)
[111] https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106222
[112] (TEMPIA et al., 2010)
[113] Template: Somali Civil War detailed map - Wikipedia with confirmation from researcher's own sources in the UN Mission in Somalia (Mr. Hussain Abdullahi) and at AUMIS.
[114] (Kefale, 2010)
[115] (Christian et al., 2018)
[116] (Christian, 2016a)
[117] (Christian, 2019)

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Bajuni Clan. The Bajuni people are a Bantu ethnic group who live primarily in the Bajuni Islands of Somalia and coastal areas between the port city of Kismayo and the city of Mombasa in Kenya. These are hard times for the Bajuni Somalis. Though they are Somali citizens, some have been driven out of their island home, often because of inter-tribal hostilities, or by the militant group, Al-Shabaab. Once driven out from their tribal homes, Bajuni refugees generally seek asylum in the UK or in Kenya and Tanzania. The ones that remain on the Bajuni Islands live in fear of being persecuted or deported. Unlike others in Somalia, the Bajuni do not have strong clans to protect their interests. They are also singled out because they are partly Sub-Saharan African instead of "pure" Somalis. Conditions in Mogadishu for an asylum returnee who is a member of the Bajuni caste are complex. They are Somali citizens, but they are not accepted as Somalians. In Mogadishu, their use of Banjuni-Swahili stands out in stark contrast, and even those that speak Somali, do so with an easily distinguishable accent. The members of the Bajuni ethnic minority are easily distinguishable by the dialect that they speak and by their genealogy recitation.[118] The former is akin to a regional accent, while the latter is an indelible mark of psychosociological placement in a tribal society that is heavily preoccupied with bloodlines. Somali parents teach their children the secret history of who they are, where they came from, and the genealogical steps that locate their family within the Somali ethnic people.[119] Somalis by custom, engage in a question and answer greeting to learn each other's clan placement. This sort of 'who's who' is of central importance in Somali life, whether at home or in diaspora, and to a degree that western's find difficult to comprehend or even follow.[120] It is this accent/dialect and genealogical recitation that make it impossible for someone of the Bajuni caste to remain innocuous or inconspicuous. Simply put, the comings and goings of people in Somalia are whispered in the wind long before one arrives at their destination. In the case of the Bajuni caste of Somali families, their ancestors were hunters and gatherers who survived through performance of activities considered 'unclean' and unworthy of a proud Somali. Some of these unclean activities included performing circumcisions for other Somalis, as well as barbers, leather workers, street sweepers, and janitors. They were often forbidden from owning land and working as pastoralists. Their work-lives, generationally inherited was too dirty for them to be allowed in politics or business; an attitude that persists to the current period. Their children are often excluded from educational pathways through artificial costs and maltreatment. This social exclusion extends to participation in Islamic social life and has resulted in many of the Bajuni people to hold onto their pre-Islamic animist beliefs, even as they identify as Muslim. In 2002, the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board determined that "members of [the] minority group… Bajuni…continued to be subjected to killings, harassment, intimidation, and abuse by armed gunmen of all affiliations" and their situation has neither been a priority for the Mogadishu based government, nor has this condition changed in the intervening decades.[121]

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[118] (Luling, 2006)
[119] (Christian, 2016b)
[120] Primary research and confirmed through follow up with the Somali International Minorities of America Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota. (501c3 Organization chartered in the State of MN and registered with the Federal Government of the USA.)
[121] (Government of Canada, 2002)

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