

# VICTORIA SHANGHAI ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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## **Security Council**

Chair Report

Topic 1: The Issue of Stability in the Somali Civil War  
Chairs: Olwen Brown & Ava Au Yeung



## Message from the Chairs

Greeting delegates, welcome to the VSAMUN Security Council! We are Olwen Brown and Ava Au Yeung, Year 11 at French International School and Year 10 at Island School respectively.

The Security Council is one of the longest-standing councils and part of the six central bodies of the United Nations. It was founded in 1945 shortly after the end of World War II, with the purpose of safeguarding international peace and security. At any given time, the council is made up of fifteen members, with each having one vote. The United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the Russian Federation are permanent members who are granted the power to veto any and all resolutions. Delegates are reminded that any decision of the Security Council is legally binding upon all UN member states.

Given that the Security Council is one of the most advanced and fast-paced councils within the MUN circuit, the chairs hold our delegates accountable for productive debate and diplomatic discussions. Delegates are strongly encouraged to conduct extensive research about countries' stances and understand the clashes of the two topics thoroughly beyond this given chair report. We expect every delegate to be well-prepared on the topic to facilitate productive discussions over the course of the conference, while making long-standing, productive and fun memories along the way.

Should you have any questions, feel free to email either of us! We look forward to meeting you all at VSAMUN.

Best wishes,

Olwen Brown ([olwen11880@g.lfis.edu.hk](mailto:olwen11880@g.lfis.edu.hk))

Ava Au Yeung ([ava.auyeung@online.island.edu.hk](mailto:ava.auyeung@online.island.edu.hk))



## Background Information

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa and is the Easternmost country in Africa, bordered by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Somalia has a dry and hot climate, and most of the land is flat. Around 85% of Somalia's population are native Somalis, mostly inhabiting the Northern parts of the country, whereas ethnic minorities are largely concentrated in the southern parts.

In northern Somalia, the semi-autonomous regional state of Puntland was founded in 1998. While it is still legally a part of Somalia, it split from the mainland after the outbreak of the 1991 Somali civil war. It is currently recognised as a "Federal Member State", incorporated into Somalia's governance system. Puntland does not try to gain international recognition as a separate state, however, and is still legally a part of Somalia, as stipulated in the Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic.

On the other hand, Somaliland, a de facto sovereign state residing next to Puntland, announced in 1991 that it wished to be a separate state from Somalia but is still not internationally recognised as such. In fact, no foreign powers recognise Somaliland as independent from Somalia itself, despite Somaliland having its own de facto government, and democratic elections. Somaliland has its own rich history, separate from that of Somalia. It split from Somalia after the Somaliland Liberation War as in the 1990s Somalia was in the midst of a vicious civil war and was seen as a "failed state". The people of Somaliland wished to be separated from the country's disintegration. Hence, there are three distinct areas within Somalia.



*Figure 1. A Map of Somalia depicting 3 different areas: Somalia's mainland, the Puntland, and Somaliland*

Historically, Somalia has functioned under a clan-based system. The country was divided into 6 clans, and the members of each clan have a fierce loyalty to their group. The social aspect of clans is extremely culturally significant in Somalia, so when Siad Barre staged a coup to seize power in Somalia rather than allow it to run under this clan-based system, it is



unsurprising that he received backlash. Somalia had been conducting democratic votes for years, where clan representatives vote on members of parliament, however, Siad Barre's goal was to unite the country and have a centralised government, moving towards a "modern" state where the onus to protect the people was on the government, rather than their clans.

Somalia's troubles started long before the country lost the Ogaden War to Ethiopia, however, this report will NOT BE EXHAUSTIVE in the interests of concision seeing as the leadup to the Somalian Civil War is extremely convoluted, and is impossible to cover in only one day. Thus, the council should focus primarily on the issue of prevalent terrorism in Somalia. Essentially, the former president of Somalia, Mohamed Siad Barre had lost face in front of his people and subsequently had a turn towards authoritarianism. His rule was filled with human rights violations, prompting the UN Development Programme to dub it "one of the worst human rights records in Africa." Many native Somali clans were being attacked, such as the dominant Isaaq clan, Majeerteen, and Hawiye clans. There was an estimated death toll of 50,000-60,000 Somalians from 1988-1989, according to "Somalia: A government at war with its own people" by Africa Watch Committee. His controversial leadership opened the gateway for movements to start and violent political groups to form. Due to the turbulent state of Somalia at the time, a perfect opportunity for political groups vying for influence had a chance to seize it, due to the power vacuum that was created. Moreover, some of these groups were being backed by Ethiopia's communist forces, allowing these attacks to be increasingly detrimental to the stability of the nation.

To exacerbate the issue, Barre's regime was toppled in the 1990s. After the end of the cold war, Somalia was no longer as important to the USA. It was previously being used as a military base, in order for the USA to have access to Africa and was a way to exert influence over the horn. The United States started providing approximately \$ 100 million USD per year in economic and military aid in the late 1970s, and this continued until 1989, as it was a strong supporter of the Barre government. However, Somalia is situated on the border of Ethiopia, which was backed by the USSR. The Ogaden War was a proxy war, and as Siad Barre had lost and was no longer backed by the USA, it is easy to understand how Siad Barre was removed from power.

The focus of the UNSC in this conference, as mentioned before, should be considering how stability can be ensured within Somalia. The country is currently plagued by two primary terrorist groups, al-Shabaab and Wilayat al Soma (also known as the Islamic State in Somalia or **ISS**). These two groups are at odds with each other, both declaring the other their "sworn enemy" and consequently creating severe instability within Somalia. This is because both groups wish to be the more prominent Jihadist group within Somalia.



## Key Terms

<b>UNSOM (United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia)</b>	The UN mission, acting in support of Somalia in improving the security situation within the nation. Also tasked with observing the ceasefire brokered by the UN in the Somali Civil War in the early 1990s.
<b>Federal Member States</b>	Local state governments have a degree of autonomy over regional affairs and maintain their police and security forces, but are still constitutionally subject to the authority of the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia
<b>al-Shabaab</b>	Salafi-Jihadist militant group based in Somalia, actively involved in the ongoing civil war in Somalia. It is allegiant to al-Qaeda and has been suspected of forging ties with them. Believed to have formed in 2006 as a result of the insecurity in Somalia, after being invaded by Ethiopia.
<b>Islamic State in Somalia</b>	Terrorist group most active in Puntland, but also responsible for terrorist attacks in other parts of Somalia. It is an Islamic-State-affiliated group, with origins tracing back to 2012. It occupies a small chunk of land in Northern Somalia, with its headquarters residing in the Golis Mountains.
<b>Counterterrorism</b>	As the name suggests, the efforts to eliminate or prevent terrorism. This typically occurs from third parties. Counterterrorism strategies are employed in nations where terrorism occurs, and are both physical and digital. For example,
<b>Ogaden War</b>	A war waged between Somalia and Ethiopia during the late Cold War, which was won by Ethiopia. One of the root causes for the severe instability within Somalia and why its leadership collapsed.



## Key Clashes

### **Clan mentality or prioritise the state?**

Due to the fact that most Somali people are part of clans, the majority of them will prioritise the interests of their clan over what would be best for the nation as a whole. Since Somalia is the home of a huge variety of clans, all with different opinions, the politics are quite fiery. It can be difficult to pass laws regarding the end of the Somalia civil war as politicians may be hesitant to allow the passage of laws that benefit other clans. Furthermore, the mindset possessed by these politicians does not lend itself well to effective resolution as a consensus must be reached by politicians in order for a content Somalia. While the nation is technically united under the federal government, socially it is not. The efforts of Siad Barre had the opposite of their intended effect- rather than uniting the nation, clan rivalries have been intensified by his leadership. Some nations may want to rush ahead and implement changes quickly, such as the international communities swift implementation of sanctions on Russia due to their special military operation, in order to stabilise the area so that trade is not affected, but others will understand the importance of creating a sustainable solution to ensure that infighting does not occur as a result of international interference.

### **Formation of Greater Somalia?**

A concept that Siad Barre was planning on making a reality (hence the Ogaden War). Barre wished to create a “Greater Somalia”, consisting of the Ogaden region, parts of Kenya, and parts of Djibouti. After the Ogaden war was, as we know, lost, Barre then turned to only supporting clans within Somalia that supported his regime. This amplified tensions between clans. Is the formation of a Greater Somalia in the cards?

### **Or simply reunite Somalia?**

Would the reunification of Somalia help with preventing active terrorist groups from wreaking havoc within the region? Al-Shabaab and the ISS are benefitting from the fragmented nature of Somalia, so would it then be worth it to put aside their differences and unite to strengthen their efforts against the violence? Does this reunification need to be physical, or could it manifest in different ways? Could a combined, temporary emergency government be something possible for Somalia?



## Key Actors

Somalia	<p>Somalia is a key stakeholder for this topic as it is the nation which the topic concerns. After suffering years of instability, the country is not able to clamp down on the savage terrorist groups which currently inhabit it, thus needing support from external parties such as the UN. Evidently, the Federal Government of Somalia would like to terminate the ongoing conflict for good and ensure that the risks of attacks are reduced. While the country has been plagued by formidable forces, there are some solutions that are arising for Somalia, such as military action and other, more diplomatic ones that will be touched upon later.</p>
Ethiopia	<p>Ethiopia has a historically troubling relationship with Somalia. With years of intertwined history, it is clear why Ethiopia would be a key stakeholder in this issue. However, the Ethiopian Government stands with the Federal Government of Somalia, opposing violent terrorist groups such as Al-Shaabab. Ethiopia has even sent troops to Somalia in order to counter such groups. This is understandable, as due to their close proximity, instability in Somalia in the form of terrorism also poses a reasonable threat to Ethiopia.</p>
Republic of Somaliland	<p>The republic of Somaliland is evidently also a key stakeholder in this issue. Despite its strong wishes to be recognised as separate from Somalia itself, no foreign power has recognised it as such. However, a representative from the Republic of Somalia is present at the UNSC seeing as the issue of instability in the region also dramatically affects them. Despite the de facto nation running under its own separate government, Somaliland is still recognised as Somalia so it is deeply concerned by the activities of terrorist groups in Somalia. Even if there have been no major terrorist attacks in Somaliland since 2008, there is still an extremely high risk of more low-scale attacks occurring. Regardless, an unstable Somalia is an unstable Somaliland. Despite this, the Republic of Somaliland will likely be interested in ensuring that it remains independent from Somalia's government.</p>
USA	<p>The USA has a history of involvement in the horn of Africa, and more specifically, in Somalia. After their cold war alliance, the USA continued to support Somalia, just in different ways than financial aid. For example, the US' counterterrorism campaign has been prominent in Somalia, which has provided drones, airstrikes and more to Somalia such as in 2008 (Operation Dawn) and 2011 (Operation Dawn of Gulf of Aden). Joe Biden agreed to send troops back to Somalia in 2022 after previous president Trump revoked them during his administration. The US clearly supports the Somali government.</p>
Kenya	<p>Kenya, similarly to Ethiopia, has an interest in Somalian terrorism being quelled due to the close proximity of the countries. For example, in 2011 Kenya deployed thousands of troops into Somalia in the interest of combatting the efforts of Al-Shabaab. Since then, Al-Shabaab has increased</p>



	attacks in Kenya, benefitting from the unstable state of the nation and weak economy. Al-Shabaab is capitalising on the vulnerability of uneducated Kenyans and recruiting them to join their forces, which is a concern for the Kenyan Government.
Turkey	Turkey and Somalia have strong bilateral relations, historically being prominent trading partners. In 2017, a Turkish military base was created at Mogashidu. Over 10,000 Somali soldiers were trained at the facility. It was the largest overseas military facility built and managed by Turkey when first constructed.
United Kingdom	The United Kingdom has provided financial and military aid to the Federal Government of Somalia, affirming that the UK supports Somalia in its territorial sovereignty and integrity. Relations between the nations are positive, with the UK being the first Western nation to reopen its embassy in Somalia in 2012 after the war.
China	China has been supported by Somalia in the UN, with Somalia signing a letter defending China's treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. This is relevant as it shows that the relationship between the nations is positive, with China even donating 13 million to Somalia. While not as involved as the UK or US, China still wants to see a stable Somalia in the future.





## Timeline

<b>Early 1990s</b>	Somalia descends into a “failed state”
<b>1991</b>	Siad Barre was ousted from his position as leader of Somalia. Clan-based opposition groups that were backed by Kenya and Libya managed to execute this, marking one of the initial prominent instances of clan-based violence.
<b>May 1991</b>	Somaliland declares independence but is not recognised as such
<b>Dec 1992</b>	UN gets involved in Somalia, launching UNOSOM peacekeeping which was led by the US
<b>1995</b>	The UN withdraws from Somalia, after several violent attacks. It did not achieve its goal of encouraging a formation of a government of national unity and did not make any progress.
<b>Oct 2004</b>	Transitional Federal Government has a leader, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, allowing Somalia to have somewhat of a stable government
<b>2006</b>	The ICU gains power and occupies the southern part of Somalia
<b>Jan 2007</b>	ICU splinters into several different factions, prompted by a defeat from President Ahmed and Ethiopian military support. Some previous members of the ICU became Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab was extremely active in the following years, scoring many military victories
<b>Dec 2008</b>	President Ahmed resigns
<b>Feb 2009</b>	Cotallion government forms, partially in order to prevent Al-Shabaab from wreaking too much havoc upon Somalia. With the assistance of AMISOM, and some African Union troops, a counteroffensive to Al-Shabaab was formed. The cotillion also formed alliances with any other fragments of the ICU not involved in AL-Shabaab’s activities
<b>Oct 2011</b>	Kenya invades Somalia. Intentions open to interpretation but did help to fight Al-Shabaab insurgents in south
<b>September 2012</b>	Al-Shabaabs final major stronghold was seized by multinational forces. The Federal Government of Somalia was finally established
<b>Present</b>	Despite the efforts of many countries in the last 20 years, Al-Shabaab is still active in Somalia. It is the council’s mission to see what can be done to prevent this



## Past Actions by the Council

UNOSOM I was dispatched in 1992 in order to help maintain peace within Somalia and encourage the formation of a central government, though it was withdrawn in 1995. It was significantly hindered by the consistent violence in the region. There have also been many resolutions passed by the UNSC in the past, including S/RES/2657, extending UNOSOM's [here](#). UNOSOM has been active in Somalia on and off for the past 30 years, so deeper reading on this would be encouraged. However, despite the UNOSOM's prolonged activity in Somalia, there have still been issues with the mission. UNOSOM I's initial mandate was never met.

It was replaced by UNITAF, which was a US-led multinational organisation with the right to use military force if it saw fit. Around 37,000 soldiers from all around the globe served in Somalia in order to assist in fighting against terrorism. UNITAF was then replaced by UNOSOM II (hence the on-and-off involvement), which possessed the same goal as UNOSOM I - however, more than 147 members of UNOSOM II were killed in Somalia during the mission, including 18 American soldiers in the October 1993 Battle of Mogadishu. Consequently, half a year later, the American government replied by removing its armed forces from Somalia and so did the UN in 1995. Currently, UNOSOM is still active in Somalia.



# Possible Solutions

There are two main possible solutions for tackling the crisis, with a third supplementary one

## **1 - Cooperation between Somalia and Al-Shabaab**

There may be a way to appease members of Al-Shabaab and prevent them from re-escalating the conflict, though this would mean compromise. Al-Shabaab is evidently a terrorist group, but by appeasing them and giving some members positions of power, perhaps these would be enough to ensure that peace is maintained. Some current Somali government members are ex-members of Al-Shabaab, so the idea is not too far-fetched. However, this solution poses many questions - is this a risk we are willing to take? How much can we compromise? Will Al-Shabaab be reasonable and accept the power given, or will they begin to seek more once the Somali government gives in to the threat posed by them? Will the international community remain uninvolved, allowing Somalia to deal with this issue independently? Or will external involvement become prevalent, causing the crisis to exacerbate, by repeating the same mistakes as Great Britain did in WW2?

## **2 - Further the conflict**

Alternatively, a completely different approach could be taken. The conflict is currently in a stalemate and is inactive, so it could be a good time to clamp down once again on Al-Shabaab. More foreign aid, military aid and others could be sent to Somalia in order to assist in this mission. However, is this fair to the Somali people after they have been subject to decades of war? Now that the nation is somewhat stable, can we risk potentially fanning the flames of the fire and creating another conflict?

## **3 - Reforming UNOSOM**

The UNOSOM has been active in Somalia for years now, however, it has failed to be extremely effective. This is because the troops previously were not completely willing to accept orders from commanders. There were also difficulties with coordinating missions due to the lack of communication between troops and commanders, as well as commanders with each other. One area of focus could also be on improving the effectiveness of UNOSOM and providing it with more resources, or perhaps even rethinking how it functions altogether. Would it be more effective to provide the peacekeeping mission with more funding? Or should the efforts be restructured?



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