

# Somalia: A Comprehensive Review on the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia

By Mohamed Abdi Mohamed

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Outlined below is a review of the document entitled “Somalia: A Comprehensive Review on the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia”

The document is comprised of five sections and a set of recommendations. I have combed through each section and identified the key points raised. I have deliberately tried to be as objective as possible by limiting my personal opinions/comments to a very minimum.

## **Context**

It is assumed that this document was published by “Somali Cause” a supposed umbrella organization consisting of seven member organizations representing Somalis in:

- Columbus, Ohio
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Washington DC
- Toronto, Canada
- Fairfax, Virginia
- Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## **Perspective**

### **Role of the Somali Diaspora**

The Somali Diaspora is a very important part of the Somali populace. They are more affluent, and have access to information and more importantly they represent an important source of repatriated funds. They also have access to their political representatives in the various areas where they live; these representatives have voices in the respective parliaments of the very donor countries that can and will contribute to the economic reconstruction of Somalia. Any Government of Somalia would be well advised to consider ways of reaching out to the Diaspora. Such considerations may include:

- How to engage the Diaspora
- How to inform the Diaspora
- How to utilize the Diaspora as a source of ideas and expertise.

## **Bridging the information divide**

It must be recognized that Somalis, living abroad, are avid readers of news about Somalia. Through the internet, phone calls to friends and relatives and other means, information, (both positive and negative) spreads very quickly on a daily basis. However, there is very little positive news on Somalia in the major news media in the very countries that can contribute to the economic reconstruction of Somalia.

Somalia is viewed as a “Failed State” in the foreign press. If one were to listen to the foreign press alone, one would read about ships being hijacked and the killing of innocent civilians; there is nothing about what the Government is doing or for that matter, whether Somalia has a functioning Government.

It is strongly recommended that the Government of Somalia adopt an “Information Offensive” targeted to Somalis, the Diaspora and the foreign press informing these populations of Government policies and active programs.

This paper is divided into six sections. These are the key issues raised in each section.

### **1.1 Overview.**

<b>Key Issue raised</b>	<b>Response required or not</b>	<b>Other remarks</b>
The TFG under the leadership of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed failed to capitalize on the popular support when it came to power.	An opinion that does not require any official response.	
The Government was not able to present a clear vision to lead the nation.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
Going forward, the key areas to measure the success of the TFG will be: Reconciliation, Security, Humanitarian aid, Development and Governance.	Response may be required.	It would be helpful if the Government issue a series of policy statements on the status and progress on some of these issues.

## 1.2 The Pre and Post –Djibouti Reconciliation Process.

Key Issue raised	Response required or not	Other remarks
Political mistakes...listed Failure to include key actors of the ARS, the selection of Parliamentarians, the expansion of Parliament & the 4.5 clan power sharing system.	An opinion that does not require any official response or reaction.	It should be noted that some of the “Key Actors” were listed on the “Terrorism List” and were not acceptable to the international community. It should also be noted that the 4.5 clan power sharing system was inherited by the TFG.
The TFG has not made any genuine effort to engage with its adversaries. Instead it relied on the protection of AMISOM forces in Mogadishu.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
The TFG leadership has wasted precious time travelling abroad to solicit funds and less time concentrating on the reconciliation process as stipulated in the Djibouti accord.	An opinion that does not require any official response	

## 1.3 Departure of the Ethiopian troops and the Surge of the AMISOM troops.

Key Issue raised	Response required or not	Other remarks
When Ethiopia withdrew its troops, the TFG failed to seize the opportunity; instead the armed insurgent groups of AL-Shabab and Hisbul-Islam have taken over all the areas previously held by the Ethiopian	An opinion that does not require any official response	

troops.		
The surge of the AMISOM troops was a missed opportunity. Troops arrived very late and failed to hold places previously occupied by the Ethiopian troops. Armed opposition troops fired mortars from populated areas. AMISOM responded by firing mortars back at populated areas from the presidential palace. This has led to the tarnishing of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed's image.	An opinion that does not require any official response	It is unfair to blame the TFG for the late arrival of AMISOM troops. The timing of the arrival was due to international considerations.

#### 1.4 United States & International Community Support

Key Issue raised	Response required or not	Other remarks
There was a commitment by the donor community in Brussels to allocate \$ 200 million for Somalia. There was no follow up and the TFG did not present a needs assessment and budgetary plans.	An opinion that does not require any official response	The Government needs to provide a status on developments since the commitment was made.
The international community can help empower the TFG by providing direct assistance and funding to strengthen the Somali security forces and other institutions of Government.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
Somali Cause advocated extending diplomatic recognition of the TFG, opening the US embassy in	An opinion that does not require any official response	

Mogadishu and establishing a Somali embassy in Washington DC.		
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### 1.5 Governance, Security and Humanitarian Condition.

Key Issue raised	Response required or not	Other remarks
When the TFG returned to Mogadishu , it failed to display unity of command, conflicting statements from Ministers etc.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
The TFG has so far neither shown the will nor the capacity to engage with and defeat the forces behind the senseless violence. Infighting among the militia leaders within the TFG recently has forced the President to fire the top generals of the Police and the military.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
The Deputy African Union representative for Somalia gave a bleak assessment on the security situation in Somalia.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
Prognosis that Somalia is on the verge of an immense Humanitarian catastrophe. Humanitarians have begun to abandon even the few areas where they were present.	An opinion that does not require any official response	
Reduction in remittances from the Diaspora.	An opinion that does not require any official response	

### 1.6 Summary of Recommendations

- The report recommends that Security must be the first priority of the TFG. In the short term, the Government must present a “National Security Plan”
- The report recommends the establishment of a National Security Commission, comprised of security and defense experts (Chaired by the President or the Prime Minister) to address the national security of the country. It was noted that AMISOM does not have the financial resources and the military capability to carry out its mandate. It is time for the UN Security Council to authorize a robust UN Mission for Somalia.
- The report recommends that a national vision for Somalia is needed; one that incorporates establishing State Institutions such as Security forces, a Judiciary system, social services and a strong bureaucracy.
- The report recommends that the Somali army needs to be trained, not in Kenya, Uganda or Ethiopia, but in Somalia but by former Somali military officers.
- The report recommends that the TFG should consider developing a national economic plan to generate enough revenue to conduct state business.
- The report states that the power sharing formula (4.5) is seen as one of the underlying causes of the misfortunes facing Somalia. It is recommended that this system be abolished.
- The report recommends that since the transition period for the TFG expires in August 2011, Somali experts must be convened to draft a new Constitution and move the Government from transitional to permanent status.
- The report recommends that any move to divide Somalia into regions based on clan identity, as an alternative to a centralized system should be rejected. Regional states must not function as independent states within an independent state.
- The report recommends that the Government nominate a Diaspora Minister to engage the Diaspora.

## SUMMARY

I have identified 16 issues raised in this document. To some degree they may have some overlap. After consideration of the issues identified and comments made:

- There were no comments in this document that suggest any support for AL-Shabbab or Hisbul-Islam.
- There were eight comments that pertained to lack of planning and missed opportunities on the part of the TFG after it assumed power.
- There were two comments that pertained to the lack of effectiveness and capability of AMISOM

- There were two comments that pertained to the grave security situation in Somalia.
- There were two comments that dealt with the 4.5 clan representational formula.
- There were two comments that criticized the leadership of the TFG.

Overall, the paper suggests that the status quo was unacceptable and expresses grave concerns as to the future of Somalia. Some comments might be construed as critical of the TFG. This may not be a true interpretation of the intent of this document. This document does not question the legitimacy of the TFG but indicates areas of concern and possible action. Its recommendations are directional and represent a call for urgent action.

Somalia is one of the areas of the world that cannot escape international attention.

The Government would be well advised to propose and Parliament to approve a resolution declaring a “ National Commitment to Good Governance”. This resolution would send a powerful message to the Somali and international community indicative of a commitment to transparency and accountability. Perception is equally as important as reality.

It is hoped that the Government evaluate these recommendations and share its views with Somalis wherever they may be.

Mohamed Abdi Mohamed  
Email: [mmfaracadde2@gmail.com](mailto:mmfaracadde2@gmail.com)  
Washington DC.  
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