THE RISE OF A JIHADI MOVEMENT IN A COUNTRY AT WAR

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IN

SOMALIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study intends to provide a fresh understanding of what the Somali Jihadi movement, al-Shabaab, has become over the last 6 years in terms of social constituency, political project, links to foreign Jihadi supporters and military power. Data are those collected by the authors and in the public domain.

The main finding of this analysis is that al-Shabaab found ways to evolve and get lessons from previous strategic mistakes. Near to be eradicated in January 2007, this group is today the most powerful one in Somalia. The main instruments for this resilience have been: highly debatable western and regional policies that allowed this movement that claims a global agenda to appear as the best defender of the Somali nationalism; the illegitimacy of its contenders in southern Somalia; and the ability to structure the organisation using economic and ideological resources in a very innovative and efficient manner, thanks to foreign support.

Yet, as analysed hereafter, al-Shabaab is not deprived of strategic weaknesses. Its status within the Somali Islamist trend is subject to bitter discussions and al-Shabaab over the last year lost the support of very influential Salafi 'ulemaa who before were sympathetic to its regional agenda. Its military tactics are often unproductive and may prove self exhausting. The fear it creates while governing populations also may push people to leave areas it controls.

Although the movement is polarized by its military agenda, it has to rule population and get involved in many day-to-day problems that create the need for a more consistent administrative framework, and raise ambitions among its commanders. While it is eager to address local issues and restore law and order, its extremism is questioned by popular grievances, as illustrated by the reactions to the current drought.

One concerning consequence of the Western misreading of the Somali crisis after 9/11 is the attraction created by Somalia for foreign Jihadists. Although most are either Somalis with a foreign passport or lost individuals (often recently converted or born again Muslims), two patterns should be considered. The Somali diaspora is playing a role that has become increasingly important both in funding that organisation or providing it with military and civilian cadres (even for short periods). The "genuine" foreign fighters are increasingly East African citizens (compared to 2007 and 2008) and this trend may likely produce Jihadi movements in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa in the next two or three years.

This work does not detail the policy implications of the analysis provided hereafter. To do so, other parameters should be put into discussion that were not part of the ToRs, such as the role of Ethiopia, the current policy of some Arab States, the ignorance of other political processes such as in Afghanistan and the problematic nature and dysfunctions of the TFG.

1. Historical background to the development of al-Shabaab

1.1. Al-Shabaab is a movement that merged four Somali groups and has been supported from its early days by foreign Islamists, including those linked to al-Qâ'idah. The four trends were a radical faction of the Salafi Islamist group al-I'tisaam (a heir of al-Itihaad), some Islamists who wanted the Islamic Courts to be militarily more efficient, Takfiir wa

Hijra and a cluster of Somali militants who had had an international experience of Jihad either in Afghanistan or elsewhere in the Arab world (maybe also in Chechnya).

1.2. Already active in 2005, the group became public early 2006 when the war against clan factions started in Mogadishu. From that period on, this movement has always acted in an autonomous manner and built itself faster than other contending groups within the Islamic Courts because it was better organized, had financial support and an ambition.

1.3. Al-Shabaab was nearly eradicated by the Ethiopian armed intervention in December 2006. The Somali population considered it responsible for numerous targeted killings of military officers, civil society leaders and aid workers but also for the death of hundreds of their supporters due to irresponsible military tactics in December 2006. Yet, al-Shabaab succeeded to reinvent itself in 2007 as the most determined and uncompromising Somali movement opposed to Ethiopia, Western States and their local ally, the Transitional Federal Government.

1.4. Never ever was the support to al-Shabaab as popular as in those years. This period brought in the organisation many people who had little commitments to its global Jihadi agenda. However, al-Shabaab was able to use the nationalist fervour to get control of nearly eight regions of south central Somalia.

1.5. The Djibouti process in 2008 provoked the strategic weakening of other Islamist trends and, paradoxically, the military reinforcement of al-Shabaab. Yet, the ideological debate was not won and al-Shabaab had to put more emphasis on the military confrontation against foreign forces (the AMISOM) than an implementation of an Islamic State. Jihad in that sense has become apolitical.

1.6. Al-Shabaab can be described as a decentralized organisation as opposed to a fragmented one. Its formal structures are supposed to provide the movement with an institutionalized leadership and predictable patters of decision making.

1.7. Its bureaucratic setting is both a transplant from outside (and foreigners indeed play a great role in those structures) but also a way to weaken arguments (such as clanism, warlordism and corruption) that have hampered all other armed groups or administrations in Somalia.

1.8. Al-Shabaab kept united, first and foremost, because the (new) TFG has not increased its legitimacy and still subsists thanks to the foreign armed presence. Moreover, due to Western policies towards Somalia and al-Shabaab, there is no political space for dissidents: they have either to stay with al-Shabaab or join the TFG, this latter option being unacceptable for most Islamists, even moderates.

1.9. Although different conceptions are sometimes publicly expressed and cleavages existed from the outset, the current leadership controls well the apparatus while the most vocal internal opponents in January 2011 did not even have a say on their body guards. Therefore, betting on any splits is an illusion under the current circumstances despite divergent agendas on the military strategy, policies towards the population and attitude in front of the international humanitarian community.

2. Recruitment

2.1. Recruitment varies over time and regions since it is decentralized and fluctuates according to the balance of forces in Mogadishu and the countryside. At the beginning, the concept was to recruit youth people (e.g. the name of the organisation) and use mostly religious discourses to convince them joining Jihad. The war situation and the Ethiopian/US/AMISOM presence enlarged the possibility of recruiting disenfranchised and frustrated youth who could be indoctrinated ideologically thank to a strong cadre of committed fighters and commanders. In certain areas also, al-Shabaab was able to use

conflicts to obtain the sympathy of some clans or sub-clans that were cornered at one point in the civil war and were eager to revenge (or so was the option proposed by al-Shabaab).

2.2. Al-Shabaab is a modern movement and its military cadres are more educated than TFG MPs. Their success in recruiting people is based on their ability to play religious emotions and engage a smart process of de-socialisation/re-socialisation. They offer more than a salary and a weapon: a way to live his/her faith within a community that shares the same values. One may compare this to a real conversion process, more than a brain washing one.

2.3. Although compulsory recruitment occurs, voluntary enrolment is the norm. This success of al-Shabaab inside and outside the country is remarkable and therefore the most concerning. It is based on the ability to frame local and global aspirations and make people believe that Jihad is a way to reform the society, address all previous failures and get Somalia again some international attention.

2.4. Yet, after nearly 4 years of continued fighting and debatable military tactics, al-Shabaab popularity among the youth is at its lowest. Civilians (and not only educated and westernized Somalis) are leaving some areas controlled by this group. Emotions may play against al-Shabaab today but one should not exclude that al-Shabaab reasserts itself because of an increased foreign military presence.

2.5. While at the beginning white foreign Jihadists were present alongside al-Shabaab, over the last year and half there seems to be many more East Africans volunteers. This concerning trend can be analysed in different manners: it could be seen as an outcome of 20 years of activism of al-Qâ'idah in East Africa; a mechanical effect of the counter-terrorist policies enforced in the region and an effect of the increased Somali presence in East Africa (and South Africa) after the defeat of the Islamic Courts in December 2006. To a large extend, Kenya has not profited from a better understanding of how radicalisation proceeds. It is going to pay the price for this misreading.

2.6. The most concerning aspect is that al-Shabaab has taken root both in Somalia and the extended region. It has achieved so using different tactics of promoting Jihad in religious circles, eliminating potential opponents (either secular or religious) and providing a living for those who joined the organisation.

2.7. The strength of al-Shabaab is to interact with the population mostly through religious duties: Shari'a, *zakaah*, *sadaqa* and the call for Jihad. Al-Shabaab fighters do not mix with the population, they create fear but also bring about predictable patterns of social and political behaviour that never existed for the last generation: people know what is prohibited and why so.

2.8. Their media policy deserves attention especially at a moment the AMISOM and the TFG have developed a less notional information policy (?) through the media they control. Al-Shabaab may be more credible outside the country than thought, because its opponents are not always subtle in the way they sell their own propaganda.

2.9. Defectors are nowadays more numerous (this phenomenon started after the offensive launched in May 2009 against the TFG) but recruitment has also intensified throughout the same period. No political gain has been made because the AMISOM and the TFG lack a decent policy to show that reintegration within a normal society is possible.

3. Military tactics

3.1. Although it is difficult to argue that al-Shabaab follows a genuine military doctrine, a number of specificities are remarkable: the use of IEDs and suicide bombers, which are basically new war technologies for Somalia; a reshaping of the combat unit based on 9

elements, while the Somali army had developed 11 member units and Ethiopian army 6 member unit; a clear focus on infantry at the difference of the common factional tactics that were coupling the use of foot soldiers and *technicals* in all environments; a high mobility of troops that could be explained by political motivations (in order to avoid creating local warlordism) but also by a need to compensate the limited number of fighters vis-à-vis the huge territory and population they need to control; a distinctive deployment of troops that are massed on the borders of the territory they control and not in the main urban centres they have taken over.

3.2. Although foreign influence is more strategic in the organisational structures of al-Shabaab, many foreign fighters are involved alongside their fellow Somalis but do not seem able to produce major value added. One may consider that their participation in battle is part of their on-going training and necessary to avoid tensions between them and Somalis who usually have a strong sense of autochthony.

3.3. The influence of the diaspora in the command structure is important and has not been often considered. That may explained why videos posted on websites close to al-Shabaab have acquired a much better quality and provide elements to prove that what is described actually happened (dates, loses and so on).

3.4. The 2011 late February early March military offensive launched by the TFG, AMISOM and Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah (and Ethiopian forces) proved once more that a sole military solution is absurd. Although al-Shabaab was seriously beaten and resorted to forced recruitment in emergency, its opponents have been unable to gain politically from those (costly) military achievements: relationships between the TFG and Ahlu Sunnah went from bad to worse since the TFG President refused to acknowledge the role of the latter. In Galgaduud, the fragile unity of the three main clans (Dir, 'Ayr and Mareehaan) collapsed on the issue of the ownership of heavy weapons. Clan divisions just increased at a time some in Nairobi were expecting a national unity against al-Shabaab.

3.5. This discrepancy between the diplomatic vision in Nairobi (al-Shabaab being the arch enemy of all) and the much more ambivalent attitude of clans and armed groups inside Somalia should deserve a proper analysis. Is the West more ideological than al-Shabaab?

4. Economics

4.1. Al-Shabaab has been smart to develop its own sources of funding and not depend of only a sole one. Outside the country, they benefit from the fame provided to them thanks to certain Western policies and videos of their achievements to get donations. To transfer those funds in Somalia, they use the customary methods as well as "white" commercial operations.

4.2. Inside Somalia, they can get support from a large stratum of the business people that may sympathise with al-Shabaab; the veiled threat on many economic operators pushes them to pay their Islamic tax (*zakaah*), offer donations (*sadaqa*) and pay for services (*qitma*) offered by al-Shabaab. This latter also promotes certain economic activities and since security has improved dramatically in areas it controls, services have developed and employment increased.

4.3. At the difference of other administrations in Somalia, they have developed and enforced a decentralized system of taxation that is reasonable and conducive for business. All major importers benefit from that situation since re-export is much easier and competitive today than anytime before (although internal consumption has drastically reduced due to the on-going fighting).

4.4. Piracy and hijacking are two sectors that provide huge funds for Somalis. While there is no hesitation to underline the role of al-Shabaab in kidnapping aid workers and other

foreigners, the issue of piracy should be treated with caution since the TFG (and others) propaganda machine is absolutely willing to associate al-Shabaab with all criminal activities. The possibility of piracy money getting to al-Shabaab is likely but further hard evidence is needed, while public information on that topic is hardly convincing.

4.5. Those taxes are in priority affected to counter the impact of the drought. Yet, in some areas, public works have been undertaken, roads rehabilitated and health centres improved. But all those efforts have had a clear benefit for the military apparatus though civilians are not excluded from those improvements.

4.6. Despite economic downturn, al-Shabaab has been able to pay salary to all its members for years: this is an achievement that other Somali entities cannot claim. Yet, the lay population complains that al-Shabaab militias do not spend much money as other militias and that their presence provokes often an economic slowdown.

4.7. Al-Shabaab seems willing to expand economic activities since it has understood that the population may first support those who improve its daily life. Changes of policy in that regard are likely in the near future if the military activities get less important.

5. Relations with other Islamic groups

5.1. Al-Shabaab relations with other Islamic groups have been at best tumultuous and more than often hostile. There were commonalities with al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam but they evaporated when the fight became vital against Ethiopia. The relations with Takfiir wa Hijra were substantial but lately became a bone of contention in the public polemics between al-Shabaab and Salafi 'ulemaa.

5.2. Whatever is believed in the West, many Jihadi movements share the same motto but differ in its understanding. Most of the Somali Jihadists were interested in a regional Jihad (involving Ethiopia more than Kenya) but had little stamina for the global Jihad. This agenda came after 9/11 and the impact of the US counter-terrorist policy in Somalia. The sympathy they have always shown in front of foreign fighters is marked by ambiguities as reflected by the limited (yet lethal) support provided by some Somali militants to the 1998 and 2002 bombings in Kenya.

5.3. Al-Shabaab arrogance and the need to find some kind of settlement among Islamists basically burnt the relations with al-I'tisaam. Over the last two years, steps were taken by key 'ulemaa close to al-I'tisaam to criticize al-Shabaab. They were subjected to campaigns of defamation even in the USA led by an association *Baraaruga Islaamka* that promotes al-Shabaab views. This is its most important defeat, until now.

5.4. The deterioration of those relations was also an indirect consequence of the competition with the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (based in Eritrea) and, later on, with Hisbul Islaam. The collapse of the fragile alliance that allowed the opposition to the TFG to take over Kismaayo in 2008 had lasting consequences. After months of tensions, when Hisbul Islaam figures were killed or bought by al-Shabaab, the former movement lost its last important bases and had to accept a merging.

5.5. This did not happen as easily as thought because of Hasan Daahir Aweys' character and his relative Islamist heterodoxy. In a matter of weeks, the old Islamist leader was appearing as very popular in the organisation and internal opponents were gathering behind him.

5.6. The current leadership reacted in an astute manner and was able to contain the crisis. In order to do so, it had to take decisions on supporting the population affected by the drought and reasserting the movement into the mainstream Sunni Islam.

5.7. The cost of this last policy was to jeopardise the relations with Takfiir wa Hijra seen by most Somalis as a sectarian movement that is un-Islamic.

5.8. The public expression of internal dissidence should not be overestimated compared to the other challenges faced by al-Shabaab: the drought that pushed many people to leave areas controlled by al-Shabaab and the ideological defeat within Salafi Islam.

6. Administrations of regions

6.1. The claim for an Islamic State does not make anymore the headlines of al-Shabaab websites. This movement may want, first, to control the capital city. But this silence may, more likely, be a hesitation on the practical consequences, especially the need to address the grievances of the population and its legitimate requests more than it does today. To a large extent, the continued situation of Jihad provides this organisation a very good excuse to escape many responsibilities linked to governing a population.

6.2. Through the routinisation of a number of processes, al-Shabaab has been able to build what we should call local administrations. The way it did it is not radically different of what some clan factions or claimed governments did in the past. Yet, in many regards, al-Shabaab seems to do better than previous attempts. Clan sensitivities are considered in a more realistic and neutral way and corruption is much less apparent, while the Jihadi organisation builds again a public sphere and shows people that the authority cannot be manipulated (for long) through clan and personal networking.

6.3. Al-Shabaab has invested in different sectors. A Shura made up of local people (close to the movement) is supposed to make decisions and works to address problems. Al-Shabaab enforces a certain policy in the education, health and judicial systems. Not all decisions are marked by extremism or intolerance. While Jihad is promoted in schools, they have also tried to improve the quality of teaching. They also check the degrees of the health staff to make sure that they cure people and do not kill them. In the courts, though they intend to follow the Hanbali *madhab*, they still consider the Shafi'i one (which is dominant among Somalis).

6.4. In their strategy of taking over a place, there is a component that could be described as distilling fear among the population. But they solve many problems and, though not popular, they are not described as the worst people on earth. Other Somalis may be.

6.5. A 2011 January speech by al-Shabaab leader reminded commanders that though they enjoy a fair level of impunity, they are not allowed to overreact and create hostility against their organisation among the population. This move largely rhetorical constitutes also a way to cool down a number of riots that took place in areas that sympathised with al-Shabaab for years. The speech interestingly reminded that regional governors can be removed by the central command if they are not good enough…

CHAPTER I
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AL-SHABAAB

The emergence of *Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujaheddin* (hereafter al-Shabaab) in Somalia has led to widespread concern today, particularly in light of political developments in Yemen which make likely increased connections between Jihadists across the Red Sea, the bombing in Kampala in July 2010 that makes likelier the development of a Jihadi trend within East Africa, without even mentioning the further radicalisation of the Somali diaspora and, beyond it, of Muslim communities in Western countries.

This movement has organised the public executions of dozens of people, the killing of Somali officials and African Union peacekeepers by suicide bombers, and called on foreign fighters to join the fray to build a sanctuary for enhancing the global Jihad led by al-Qâ'idah.[1]

There are different narratives to make sense of the emergence of that movement in Somalia. The two main (serious) ones are built on different visions of internal and external dynamics of Somali political Islam, though both acknowledge the importance of taking into account local and more global trends.

The first one emphasizes the role played by a cluster of militants – Somalis and non Somalis - who had gained experience in Afghanistan and were either members or associates of al-Qâ'idah. Those people succeeded for a number of reasons to hijack the Somali Islamist movement. By edging out its less puritan leaders, these militants were able to build a Jihadi organisation that was at the forefront of the offensive against the warlords in spring 2006, pushed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) into a bloody confrontation with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Ethiopia later that year and continued bloody skirmishes until today while they control more than 8 regions in southern Somalia. This vision is reflected in a number of public reports and built a narrative that emphasizes a number of contradictions within Shabaab, national/global Jihadi agenda, insurgency/terrorism and the like[2].

This understanding does not lack arguments, especially if al-Shabaab websites have to be taken seriously[3]. An internet search provides many documents (whether genuine or not) on the intimate connections between al-Shabaab and al-Qâ'idah[4]. For example, the *Long War Journal*[5] claims that it has videos showing Saleh Ali Saleh Naban (a key organiser of the 1998 bombings in

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[1] For an example of this *doxa*, see Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "The Strategic Challenge of Somalia'a al-Shabaab", *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 16, n° 4, fall 2009. Evan F. Kohlmann, *Shabaab al-Mujahideen: Migration and Jihad in the Horn of Africa*, April 2009, among many others.

[2] Some analysts (even from a Conflict prevention international NGO) strangely enough suggested that counterterrorism could provide "a door through which longer term international re-engagement in peace, reconciliation and state reconstruction...should take place", International Crisis Group, "*Somalia: countering terrorism in a failed State*", May 2002, p. 2.

[3] Amazingly, in many analyses, no proper cross checking is made as if this organisation or its leaders would just say what they believe…

[4] For background on *al-Qâ'idah*, one can refer to the solid work of Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, New York, Vintage Books, 2006. Saleh Nabhan was killed in September 2010 by US Special Forces.

[5] http://www.longwarjournal.org/

Nairobi and Dar es-salaam) and Sheekh Mukhtaar Roobow Abuu Mansuur (then spokesperson for *al Shabaab*) visiting training camps; in another video (2 September 2008), the same Saleh swore a *bayat* (loyalty oath) to al-Qâ'idah on behalf of al-Shabaab; and in a third (November 19, 2008) Ayman al-Zawahiri invited *al-Shabaab* members to fight until the establishment of "a State of Islam and Tawhid[6]".

The authors of this work belong to a different school of thought. Their main differences with the first group of experts are based on several arguments. First, al-Shabaab should not be seen as a transplant of al-Qâ'idah from Afghanistan, but as a entity produced by the merging of different groups that were supportive of Jihad and were Salafis but had not the same understanding of those terms. Therefore, first and foremost, it is an outcome of a radicalisation process that can be explained by local dynamics as much as events taking place in Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq. This history explains both the way some militants rally Shabaab and others dissociate themselves from it as it is explained below.

The outsiders – Somalis and non Somalis - had a strong impact in the building of the organisation in the sense that their local fellow comrades were ready for changes and thought that the new methods would bring them a greater success than keeping the old ways. The military dynamics on the ground made those moves much easier and more natural that often believed. In a war situation, questioning is limited and many choices that had systemic implications were made on the spot. This also explains why al-Shabaab from the very beginning had to cope with different ideological trends and the footprints of other Somali organisations that the "more externalized" faction wanted to eradicate.

A last point has to be made. While a number of explanations proposed here are clearly tentative, there could be an attempt to go back to the best anti-terrorist *deus ex machina*: "al-Qâ'idah gave specific orders to do this or not to do that". The authors have had no access to "privileged information" and were focussed on the Somali arena using their personal understandings and contacts. Therefore, they cannot fault explanations of that kind. Yet, they would need an answer to why sometimes al-Shabaab looks so obedient and other times so independent….

This chapter sheds light on the sociological and political background of al-Shabaab. First, it offers a description of the conditions by which different trends merged to become al-Shabaab near 2004. While a cluster of people who fought in Afghanistan were at the forefront, other components of this movement were deeply rooted in the trajectories of the Somali Islamist trend throughout the civil war.

A notable characteristic is that its most prominent enemies (Addis-Ababa and Washington) were instrumental in promoting its growth: the US intervention in Somali politics from 2001 to 2006, especially its support to unsavoury warlords, and the Ethiopian armed intervention of late 2006 to January 2009 (after many limited operations in the 1990s and early 2000s) were events that allowed this movement to take root in Somali society, despite its initially having been rejected and its continuing unpopularity among the majority of the population.

The second section deals more precisely on the ways al-Shabaab built itself from its creation onwards as an organization. While the proper military tactics are examined in chapter IV, this

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[6] Tawhid means uniqueness (of God) and is the key concept of Wahhabism. See David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, London & New York, I. B. Tauris, 2006.

section offers more a view of how Shabaab succeeded to build itself as the main and eventually only armed Islamist movement against the TFG, AMISOM and the West.

The point made here is that foreigners indeed play a major role in al-Shabaab internal structure since they contributed to build structures and manage them over times. This may be compared with al-Qâ'idah that was an extremely bureaucratized entity, which allowed it to work despite various nationalities involved. The same logic could apply for al-Shabaab: those bureaucratic institutions, at the differences of the armed factions the Somalis got used to in the 1990s, allow the movement to function efficiently by controlling the ambitions of local commanders and keeping clanship under control to a large extent. This does not mean (or imply) that they are leading the organisation through some kind of shadow Shura. Other scenarios could be envisioned, including the will by Somali key leaders of al-Shabaab to hand over responsibilities to them for the sake of proving that al-Shabaab cannot be compared to any previous armed organisations either secular or Islamist in Somalia. This description, if valid, means that dismantling al-Shabaab would be a daunting project.

1. A political history

International discourse on al-Shabaab stresses commonalities with the Taliban and al-Qâ'idah: its main leaders were trained in Afghanistan, and its ideology reflects the Salafi-Jihadi trend that is witnessed in that country. There is some truth in that description, but this trend is only one of three that merged to establish this movement. One should also account for trends expressed in the radicalisation of Somali Islamist organizations in the 1990s and especially after 9/11: the militarist and populist factions that came out of the experiment of the Islamic Courts and the collusion with the Somali branch of Takfiir wa Hijra. Al-Shabaab is therefore more than an "Afghan/al-Qâ'idah" transplant; it is also the offshoot of a local history of political Islam.

That history is reflected in the variety of behaviours and policies its field commanders enforce in areas they control, a spectrum so broad that rumours of splits and exclusions have been recurrent over the last five years, despite their not having actually happened.[7] Al-Shabaab is said to have come into being late 2004 or early 2005, but this date can be disputed since, in fact, most of those who became its leaders were already settled in Somalia and actively promoting their views within different constituencies such as Islamic NGOs, the business sector or militia groups. As explained below, its establishment corresponded to a specific situation when Islamists were again winning influence and popular support after years in retreat.

1.1. Learning from failures? The radicalisation of the Somali Islamist movement

The main Somali Islamist movement, al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyya, started (as its name indicates) as a merging of different groupings in the early 1980s[8]. Its ideological references encompassed a broad spectrum of stances, ranging from religious figures politically radicalised against a dictatorship who did not want to join leftist and secularist armed groups to people who already had connections with the Islamist movements in the region via people close to the Muslim

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[7] For instance, one of al-Shabaab's charismatic leaders, Mukhtaar Roobow/Abuu Mansuur is said to have dissented even at the time of this Islamic Courts Union; nevertheless, he is still in the leadership years after. See Chapter II for details.

[8] See for a history, Z. S. *History of the ASWJ*, London FCO, October 2010.

Brotherhood. Its internal consistency was weak, which became a source of tensions in the late 1980s, especially between the Wahhabi trend and others who were not anti-Sufi.

When the civil war started in 1991, some Islamists became militarily organised and intended to compete with clan-based militias that enjoyed huge popularity. Despite its resilience, al-Itihaad that counted no more than 700 fighters at that time[9], was badly defeated several times in conditions that showed how clan appeal was still strong among would-be Islamists: clan division among its membership rather than unity was the norm then. After a series of lost battles, the group debated a strategic turnabout. While some were still campaigning for the group to be a military actor, the majority of al-Itihaad emphasized political and ideological work among the lay population: da'wa was seen as a greater priority than violent Jihad[10]. This choice was not consensual and produced two important diverging paths.

First, a section of al-Itihaad set up another organization that was vibrantly Salafi: al-I'tisaam bil-Kitaab wa al-Sunnah (hereafter al-I'tisaam). This corresponded both to an internal clarification and to a growth of external influence on Somali Islamists[11]. The latter came in the form of aid channelled through Islamic NGOs, contracts to business people who funded the group and military training provided in or outside Somalia. The most doctrinaire section of this group eventually joined al-Shabaab in late 2004. Second, several field commanders refused to return to civilian life and were adamant about pursuing the military option. Many moved into the private sector and worked as heads of security for Islamist business people or Islamic NGOs, but this militaristic Islamist trend was searching for new opportunities: al-Shabaab provided one.

These ideological and political developments took place in a context largely framed by the inability of the international community to shape a solution to Somalia's problems. There was, however, definite success in containing the Somali crisis within its territorial borders thanks to regional allies, first and foremost Ethiopia. This played out in the long-term interests of the Islamist trend, since many Somalis perceived Ethiopia as a historical enemy and a Christian nation. The relative lack of interest of Western States after the failure of UNOSOM (1992-1995) was not matched in the Muslim world: the Gulf's Islamic charities (many of which were put on the US list of organisations sponsoring terrorism after 9/11)[12] remained active in Somalia and contributed to the creation of a network of civil society activists, business people and politicians who could rally different quarters of Somali society on certain issues, such as the Islamic Courts.

The events of 9/11 and their aftermath provided most militants with new opportunities, although at first the Somali population was shocked and sympathised with the sorrow of the US people. Because the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-salaam in August 1998 had been possible thanks to logistical support provided by some members of al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam, the US administration took drastic measures against Somali Islamists in September and November 2001.

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[9] Interview with Hasan Daahir Aweys, 2006.

[10] This is also reflected in discussion with al-Qâ'idah in 1992 and 1993. See Harmony Project/Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, *'Al-Qaida's (mis)adventures in the Horn of Africa'*, http://ctc.usma.edu/aqII.asp pp. 40-41.

[11] This is also true elsewhere in the Horn. The spread of Salafi Islam increased dramatically after 1990. Yet, one should be careful about not drawing political conclusions too quickly.

[12] In particular, al-Haramein and International Islamic Relief Organisation among others..

Although a US military intervention was dismissed after a few weeks' debates, Washington decided to undertake what can be described as an underground war against the alleged members and supporters of al-Qâ'idah in Somalia. This policy was strengthened after the November 2002 bombing of a Mombassa hotel and the concurrent failed attempt to shoot down an Israeli plane in Kenya. Washington's regional ally, Ethiopia, was tasked to help identify and eliminate specific targets. To be more efficient, surrogate local forces – mostly hit-squads associated with faction leaders and warlords - were put on the payroll of the US and Ethiopian security services.

Since the international focus was not on Somalia and its internal situation was already chaotic, no one in the West paid much attention to the consequences of this policy in terms of radicalising the Islamists at large and increasing their popular support. Although several significant Jihadi operatives were killed or taken to Ethiopia, collateral damage was significant, and Somali public opinion quickly sided with Islamic militants with whom it had little in common. Moreover, the latter adopted the same tactics as Ethiopian security forces and initiated campaigns of targeted killings (which until then had not happened to any great degree).

1.2.   The experiment of the Islamic Courts[13]

Somalia - even Mogadishu - did not face complete chaos except for short periods[14]. Nonetheless the restoration of law and order was a core issue at local levels, as hope for a central and able government recurrently collapsed. Consequently, there were numerous experiments of Islamic Courts that showed the resilience of the idea of justice and the need for security.

These Islamic Courts shared commonalities over time. They were locally rooted (mostly in Mogadishu) and were set up for securing specific areas where free-lance thugs were operating. While Islamists were campaigning for their establishment as soon as possible, the business people were the key decision-makers because they were the only ones to have a decisive influence on clan elders, to be able to fund them and to lend military hardware. These Islamic Courts were clan or sub-clan based and therefore had no authority over other sectors of the population. This limitation may seem strange and impractical – it is to a large extent – but it made sense in an urban setting polarised by clan identity, as well as reflecting the local ambitions of these institutions. The Courts were not initially controlled by a specific Somali Islamic trend, especially after 9/11: clan elders and businessmen wanted to avoid a confrontation with the US and appointed judges to all the courts who belonged to a broad spectrum of religious opinions. Nevertheless, Islamists were part of the process and were overrepresented in the militias that enforced the decisions of the Courts.

From October 2002 onward, the warlords and the international community gathered in Kenya to once more establish a reconciliation government, this time the so-called Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that eventually came to existence in October 2004. Meanwhile, the situation in Mogadishu became increasingly affected by gangs of thugs who were kidnapping foreigners, aid workers, traders and visiting members of the diaspora. A new set of Islamic Courts came into being. To a great extent, they reproduced the patterns of the earlier Courts, but they also had to cope with three new phenomena: a delinquent underworld made of thugs who belonged to

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[13] For an account of the Courts, see Roland Marchal, "A tentative assessment of al-Shabaab", *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, November 2009.

[14] In the case of the capital city, the first three weeks of January 2001, mid-November to early March 1992 and a few weeks between February and June 2006.

many clans and did not comply anymore with clan rules, the effects of the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT) and despair about the ability to set up a local administration that could manage security at a time when faction leaders were becoming MPs and ministers but had lost most of their ability to secure the areas they claimed to control.

A major weakness of the Courts (there were nearly ten in Mogadishu in 2004) was that clan rules prohibited full cooperation. As a result, many officials of the Islamic Courts, whether Islamists or not, felt the need for militias who would simply enforce law and order without caring for clan rules.

Islamists were also keen for the same goal for political reasons: between 1998 and 2000 they (and others) had built a set of capable Islamic Courts, but most of the Courts' leaders were co-opted into the then Transitional National Government set up in Djibouti in August 2000 as representatives of their respective clans. Within a matter of weeks, the Islamic Courts were practically dismantled by their integration into a notional TNG apparatus; the Islamists who had played a strategic role in developing the Courts lost everything. Moreover, up to 2000, the *technicals* were lent by the business people and Islamists were keen to build a proper autonomous force for the Courts, especially if they were to be in charge of the militias. History should not repeat itself.

1.3. The emergence of Shabaab

As a result, in 2005 Islamists and others interested in the success of the Courts aimed to avoid a repetition of the events of August 2000 and obtained a political endorsement from the Islamic Courts' leadership to set up a facility to train the new militias. This was an opportunity that several operatives did not want to miss.

Hasan Daahir Aweys[15] was of course in the forefront of this initiative. At that time, a number of Islamic courts (Saleebaan, Duduble, 'Ayr and Harti Abgaal) were already allied and Aadan Haashi 'Ayrow[16], the military commander of the most powerful Court in charge of coordinating the militias. They had also, unsurprisingly, the backing of the remnants of al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam.

This training camp, first called *Mu'askar Mahkamad* (Troops of the Islamic Courts) then later *Jamaa'a al-Shabaab*, was going to become the core location of al-Shabaab organization. This was also possible because of the destruction of the Italian cemetery and a huge financial reward provided to Aadan 'Ayrow and his colleagues (including Khaliif 'Adale) by the Italian government to get the bones of the corpses that had been dig out the cemetery. The training camp was part of a madrassa called Ayuub built on a section of this cemetery and controlled then by al-I'tisaam. At that time, the key figures were Aadan 'Ayrow, Mukhtaar Roobow and Abdullaahi Ma'allin Nahar known as Abu Qutayba[17]. This at least was the first and apparent structure of the group.

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[15] Haber Gidir/'Ayr/Ayanle, he is former military leader of al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam and may be considered as one of the last figures of Somali Islamism of the 1980s.

[16] Haber Gidir/'Ayr/Absiye/ Kulmiye/Reer Hirole. He was killed on 1st May 2008 by a US missile in Dhuusamareeb.

[17] A trader in Bakaraaha, he was a member of al-I'tisaam before joining al-Shabaab. He was Murosade/Sabti/Israafiil. Responsible for Mogadishu security throughout the ICU period, he was killed in January 2007 during the Ethiopian intervention.

The camp was managed by a committee of 15 persons and though many were members of al-Shabaab[18], a good number was not and eventually shifted to more moderated factions (including Sheekh Shariif's)[19]. While it was likely that the key figures of al-Shabaab had a plan, at that time their agenda was minimalist and that they were still weak enough to have to work with others.

But as happened often in following years, al-Shabaab got support from its most radical enemies. The US made two significant miscalculations that contributed to the growth of al-Shabaab. The first was a misreading of specific incidents in Mogadishu that pushed the CIA to overtly endorse a loose alliance of warlords against the Islamic Courts at a time in 2006 when the former were hugely unpopular. The outcome was a popular upheaval in the capital city against these unsavoury American allies and significant gains for al-Shabaab, which was able to get a share of the warlords' huge arsenals. The second strategic miscalculation was congruent with the first, as Washington prompted (or endorsed) a large-scale Ethiopian armed intervention in Somalia.

Early February 2006, al-Shabaab became known to everyone, especially because they entered the fray with an arrogant stance and blunt requests that they made recurrently in all episodes of fighting. First, they claimed to be autonomous and showed no will to coordinate with other groups of the Islamic Courts. As said before, the Islamic Courts were decentralized and welcomed different ideological trends including within their militias. By doing so, al-Shabaab knew that it would need to get its own supplies (but money was not then a problem) and that it could claim its part of the booty (*qanima* being the Quranic concept for it).

From that time on, bitter comments on the poor quality of the Islamic Courts leadership became recurrent and central figures such as Abuukar 'Umar 'Adaan, Ahmed Nuur Ali Jim'ale and even Hasan Daahir Aweys were criticized. The presence of foreign fighters in their camp was never concealed[20]. Just after the defeat of the warlords in June 2006, a meeting gathering all fighting forces took place at the Ramadan hotel in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab did not show up but sent its requests to get included: Shari'a should be enforced without any qualifications; it should get its good share of the booty (notably of the arsenals owned by some warlords, especially 'Abdirashiid Ilqeyte, Muuse Suudi and Mahamed Qanyere); it also claimed one third of all positions in the Islamic Courts Union; and last but not the least for Western countries, it wanted the ICU to welcome foreign fighters without any conditions.

The meeting went bad to the extent that the attendance had to call Hasan Daahir, who at that time was in Gure'eel. This latter eventually bargained a deal but basically al-Shabaab conditions were accepted. From that time on, al-Shabaab flag became the black flag that impresses Somalis as much as foreign diplomats. Eventually, of the 18 members of the ICU Executive Council, at least 6 had been members of al-Itihaad and five were active members of al-Shabaab. Ahmed Aw 'Abdi Mahamuud Godane[21] was appointed Secretary General; Fu'aad Mahamed Khalaf Shongole

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[18] Among them, Ahmed Godane, Ibraahim al Afghani, Fu'aad Shongole, Khaalif 'Adale, Mukhtaar Abuu Seyla', Mukhtaar Roobow, a son of the owner of the Hargeysa Mansuur hotel,

[19] Mahamuud 'Abdi Amey who was deputy finance officer throughout the ICU and went with Sheekh Shariif; Faarah Yaare who worked previously at Global, a money transfer company or even Qatato who went with Hisbul Islaam and was executed by Shabaab.

[20] They were welcomed at the Kenyan border and at the Mogadishu airport and brought to al-Shabaab facilities.

[21] Also known as Sheekh Mukhtaar Abu Zubayr. Godane is the nickname of his father who was a member of a Sufi order. His own nickname is Afgaduud.

(Awartable/Daarood) [22] put in charge of education; Moheddin Mahamed 'Umar (Sheekhaal/Hawiye) in charge of health[23]; Abdullaahi Ma'allin Nahar known as Abu Qutayba head of Mogadishu Security; Mukhtaar Roobow/Abuu Mansuur the deputy of the head of defence, Yuusuf Indha'adde; Khaliif 'Adale the deputy of Ibraahim 'Addow, in charge if ICU Foreign Affairs.

From June 2006, the Islamic Courts had been able to rule Mogadishu and, a few weeks later, a large part of Southern Somalia; Al-Shabaab benefited from the internal disorganisation of the Courts and grew more influential in the security sector. Yet it had to face growing opposition from different quarters, including Sufis and Wahhabis who were part of the Islamic Courts' leadership. Meanwhile, in August Ethiopia positioned troops in Baydhabo, the then-de facto capital of the Transitional Federal Government. Although this was not a unfounded move -- the TFG was already crumbling, and ministers and the President had just escaped an attempted killing -- the subsequent massive Ethiopian military intervention in late December 2006 was a blessing for al-Shabaab.

Although routed at first in early 2007, al-Shabaab again rebuilt itself by projecting itself as the staunchest nationalist and Islamic group within the resistance (*muqawama*) to a foreign "Christian"[24] occupation. Its resilience was not based only on an internal mobilisation. The flows of foreign fighters (being Somalis or not) did contribute to its growth. Not only had the West been unable to let contradictions within the Islamic Courts Union bringing about clarification but the Ethiopian army provided a further argument for global Jihadists to join the fray.

Another component of its resilience was the ability of al-Shabaab to develop a full range of terrorist tactics while others in the *muqawama* were still practicing a guerrilla war. These targeted killings reached such a level that the Hawiye clan elders asked Shabaab to stop doing so and even leave Mogadishu late 2008. Once again, the latter paid lip service to that request, denied being responsible and got eventually the support of Hasan Daahir Aweys to be back in the capital city.

Their strength was not only military but also political. While other sectors of the armed opposition to the TFG and its Ethiopian ally split and mobilised clan rhetoric throughout most of 2008, al-Shabaab maintained its radical stance, which eventually appeared the only correct one to many people. This self confidence expressed itself in the aggression against Sufi practices late 2008 and the explicit claim at that time to build in Somalia an Islamic Emirate. At the difference of the Taliban who grew more flexible towards certain religious practices when they restarted the insurgency, al-Shabaab leaders showed a more brutal opposition to those practices compared to 2006. At that time, for instance, when they took over Kismaayo, they did not formally prohibit Sufi ceremonies. In December 2008, they destroyed tombs of Saints which became the symbol of a new war between them and Ahlu Sunnah wal Jaama'ah (ASWJ) backed by Ethiopia more than the TFG, to say the least.

The claim for an Islamic State, stated many times in 2008 (but much less after) may underline an aspect that should be borne in mind: throughout the Ethiopian presence, al-Shabaab was supported by many Somalis independently of its own agenda and got its most impressive success

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[22] Shongole was the nickname of his father, a celebrated sports man in Somalia.
[23] He was killed alongside 'Ayrow on 1 May 2008 in Dhuusa Mareeb. He was also a former al-Barakat employee.
[24] Most of the Ethiopian soldiers were actually Muslims, and a majority was ethnically Somali.

ever. In a matter of months, al-Shabaab was able to take over Kismaayo, Merka, Baydhabo, Jowhar and appeared by far and large as the most powerful organisation in Somalia. It actually was not but it was proactive in its major military moves and knew how to promote its victories, while the other contenders often were reacting or simply acted locally. Yet al-Shabaab was not numerous at that time (no more than very few thousands) and had much less fighters and *technicals* than the remnants of the Islamic Courts Union.

Observers thought that the movement would not recover after the departure of the Ethiopian forces early January 2009 and the election of a then popular cleric, Sheekh Shariif Sheekh Ahmed, in late January as the new TFG president. At first, events seemed bear this interpretation out, but al-Shabaab was once more able to benefit from changed dynamics. The group undertook a vigorous recruitment campaign after it had extended its control of cities south of Mogadishu and also benefited indirectly from the TFG's complex internal situation, including a power-sharing agreement among groups that bitterly distrusted each other and the continued presence of a foreign force, AMISOM.[25]

2. Getting organized

Information about the internal set up of al-Shabaab is sketchy and what follows is particularly tentative. Secrecy in an Islamist organisation is not rare but, in case of Somalia, its level is surprising since the leadership of other Somali Islamist organisations were never shy to express their views, sometimes contradicting each other. This could be further evidence that the foreign transplant plays a great role in al-Shabaab. The following data reflect an organisational chart but hardly says anything about the genuine allocation of power among them and between Shura's members and Maktabs (or ministries).

Yet, one point has to be emphasized. Al-Shabaab – like al-Qâ'idah - is a quite bureaucratic organisation if considered in a Somali context or compared to the TFG. People who join should provide CVs, IDs, and telephone numbers of their relatives. There are plenty of internal regulations that touch all aspects of life, salary scale, marriage and leaves. As heard in one discussion, the very proof that foreigners are important in al-Shabaab management is that those data are collected, stored and used when necessary, that salaries are paid every 28th of the month and that no money can be diverted for long from the organisation without lethal punishment. This may sound too mundane but a quick glance at the TFG achievements or the inability of the warlords in 2005 to reach half of that standard while they were entrenched for years in Mogadishu shows that we are dealing with something different.

Whatever al-Shabaab rhetoric is, the routinisation of those practices and the expansion of those would-be institutions rebuild an authority that is heterogeneous compared to, and profoundly distinctive of the population (a process that never took place with the armed factions) and a new definition of the public sphere. Recreating different social statuses and defining new processes of subjection are definitively parts of State-building. There is no discussion that those processes take place through coercion and fear, and aim at restoring a military supremacy of this movement in Somalia. The period, al-Shabaab has been ruling populations, is very short in

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[25] Roland Marchal, "Changing paradigm in Somalia", Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria), December 2009.
(http://www.issafrica.org/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/SITREPSOMALIA14122009.PDF?link_id=3&slink_id=9313&link_type=12&slink_type=13&tmpl_id=3)

terms of institution building; its legacy at this stage seems more ideological. Yet one should carefully assess whether those new practices are taking roots. Six years ago, few people – and certainly not the authors -would have believed in the success of an organisation like al-Shabaab. It simply happened.

2.1. The Supreme Council (Shura)

The top leadership structure is the Shura. This institution functions by consensus since it endorses a Quranic prescription (see Sura 3, Verse 159). Its mandate is to discuss all important issues concerning the organisation, ideological, political, or military. Its membership is not known for sure. Al-Shabaab websites keep quoting its decisions and views but never ever provided its number and membership. Educated guesses go often to 31 members but some observers add that after the merging with Hisbul Islaam it grew up to 53. Rumours say that foreigners are included in the Shura but one may wonder in which language the discussions take then place. The Shura might not be the most relevant in terms of decision making, whatever al-Shabaab websites claim. One of its main roles is to dilute the recurrent question on clanship.

In Somalia, political science can be turned upside down: over time an organisation gets identified with its leader and not the opposite. Therefore, an unidentified Shura is the best solution to dismiss any sensitivity to clan: no one can start counting members of a specific clan family or underline the exclusion of some important sub-clans, and so on. Yet, rumours in Mogadishu often said that al-Shabaab leadership is controlled by Isaaq militants and that would explain why they are so careless about the life of their fighters and the civilians in southern Somalia. One point often heard throughout this work is that Ahmed Godane is only accountable to his foreign friends and therefore careless while others, like Mukhtaar Roobow or Sheekh 'Ali Dheere are managing a war in the territory of their population and have to care about this latter. Whether true or not, this explanation makes a point: the difference between them is not the ideological stance but the means for political survival.

The view of the authors which is not based on hard evidence is that there is a dual structure with a few members of the Shura being associated to the debates with some foreign fighters (including of course those who belong to al-Qâ'idah). Among those Somalis, two are very important: Ahmed Godane and Ibraahim al-Afghani.

Ahmed Godane is important because he is al-Shabaab's Amiir. As per theology, he should keep this position until he dies; therefore a transfer of leadership without violence seems near to impossible at this stage. Ahmed Godane was very close to Aadan Haashi 'Ayrow. One can doubt that he was selected for any other reason. He has been in Afghanistan several years and spent years in southern Somalia (he was in Mogadishu as an employee of Dahabshiil) but does not know personally many al-Itihaad cadres who defected after that movement was defeated by Ethiopia. As 'Ayrow (but without his charisma) he is younger than many cadres of his movement. Amazingly enough, his speeches echo different styles: one being Quranic recitation, another being Somali poetry. This latter is a clear allusion to Sayid Mahamed 'Abdulle Hasan who led the upheaval against the British at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ibraahim Haaji Mee'aad Afghani is, in the view of the authors, a much more powerful figure though hardly in the forefront. First, he is better educated than Godane and got his higher degree (MA in IT) in Pakistan. He has been a cadre of al-Itihaad and therefore knows well the internal history of the Islamist movement in Somalia. His age also provides him with greater respect in the Somali society. Over the years, he is the one who developed and entertained the

relations with the most important foreign fighters and al-Qâ'idah cadres. He played an important role in setting up the administration in Kismaayo against a certain tradition that had failed. His role makes him a genuine mentor of al-Shabaab.

2.2 The ministries/offices or Maktabs

There are a number of ministries or offices that are supposed to enforce decisions made by the Shura. One can quote the following ones.

Maktabatu Difaa' is the equivalent of a ministry of Defence. It may be chaired by Ahmed Godane since Aadan 'Ayrow was in charge until his death. It is fairly possible that a deputy handles the day-to-day business. All militias are listed when they join and should provide the organisation with data about their personal history and their relatives. While data collection is centralised, recruitment takes place at a local level and recruits are sent to training camps. According to testimonies made by defectors and published in the newspapers, the activities focussed on physical exercises (a way to get around sport's prohibition?) and minimal proper military training. Only few get training on IEDs. This *Maktab* also makes decision on promotion and transfer of the military staff.

Maktabatu Amniat is the equivalent of the ministry of Intelligence and Internal Security. His chair is a long time member of al-Shabaab, Sheekh Mukhtaar Abuu Seyla'i, who belongs to the Isaaq clan. This organisation is tasked with the targeted killings of whoever is believed to be associated with the TFG, AMISOM or simply socially influential and ideologically too far from al-Shabaab. In order to do so, hit squads can be al-Shabaab full members but also sympathizers recruited in the schools. This *Maktab* monitors the calls made by people they believe are spying al-Shabaab: often, young students just recruited, are tasked to check the numbers and provide the evidence that the suspect is a spy. In May 2010, a mosque in Bakaraaha market was bombed: the place was also the HQs of the al-Shabaab Intelligence in Mogadishu (led by 'Umar Mataan) although the primary target might have been Fu'aad Shongole who was lecturing in the madrassa adjacent to the mosque,.

Maktabatu Da'wa is the equivalent of the ministry of Religious Affairs and Orientation. This is a crucial place for disseminating al-Shabaab ideology and viewpoints concerning Islam, Shari'a, and Jihad. Da'wa is an essential task for al-Shabaab whenever it has to interact with the population. Its members underline their radical teachings in Quranic schools and other educational facilities. Furthermore, one should be aware that da'wa is also performed for the business people, the women and so on. Behind this priority, there is a basic principle taken from the Wahhabi doctrine: the Somali culture has misinterpreted Islam teachings and al-Shabaab's role is to guide people in the right path.

This *Maktab* has become even more important after January 2009 when al-Shabaab had to face former ICU leaders who had joined the TFG and got the support of influential clerics in the Arab world such as the Qatari based *'alim*, Yuusuf Qaradawi. Actually, this raises the question of how al-Shabaab fatwa are conceived and by whom. It became a crucial issue because of the importance of religious *fatwa* in this context and the difficulty of al-Shabaab to find religious authorities able to contest speeches made opponent clerics. A paradox is that important fatwa are pronounced from outside Somalia by clerics who stay in the diaspora, either in Kenya, the USA or the UK.

The chairperson of this *Maktab* is Fu'aad Shongole (a Somali/Swedish citizen). Over the last months, he seemed to have had a series of bitter arguments with al-Shabaab leadership but there is little doubt for the authors that he is still in charge though his personal ascendancy over lay members has clearly diminished (see chapter II).

Maktabatu Siyaasada iyo Gobolada is the equivalent of a ministry of Interior focussing on local administration and politics. It also deals with social affairs. Just before the Ethiopian/TFG/ASWJ/AMISOM offensive of late February and early March 2011, this *Maktab* was in charge of Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, Gedo, Lower Shabeelle, Middle Shabeelle, Hiiraan, Bay, and Bakool. Moreover, it controlled at least three districts in Galgaduud ('Eel Buur, 'Eel Dheer, Gal Hareere), in Mogadishu (Karaan Huriwaa, Dayniile, Yaqshiid, and 'Abdi Asiis). Its leader is Huseen 'Ali Fiddow (Murosade/Foor'ulus/Haber Mohamed/Hilibi). One can quote the names of other al-Shabaab leaders.

The Amiir walaaya of Galgaduud is Sheekh Yuusuf Kaba Kutukade (Abgaal/Wa'aysle/Reer Fiqi); Reer Fiqi is a minority in Abgaal politics (see chapter 2). The Amiir walaaya of Hiiraan is Sheekh Yuusuf Ali Ugaas (Hawaadle/Reer Ugaas). The Amiir walaaya of Middle Shabeelle is Abshir 'Ali Bukhari (Mareehaan). The Amiir walaaya of Banaadir was Sheekh 'Ali Mahamuud Huseen (Abgaal/Wa'buudhan/Reer Mataan) but was replaced in February 2011 by Sheekh 'Abdullaahi Hasan 'Umar 'Anshuur (Hawiye/Haber Gidir/'Ayr). The Amiir walaaya for Lower Shabeelle is Sheekh Mahamed Hareed (Hawaadle/'Abdi Yuusuf); his sub-clan is a minority in Hawaadle politics. The Amiir walaaya of Lower and Middle Jubba is Sheekh Hasan Ya'quub 'Ali (Rahanweyn/Leysan): he is from a minority clan. The Amiir walaaya of Bay is Mahamed 'Umar 'Abdikariim (Dir). The Amiir walaaya of Bakool is Sheekh Adaan 'Ali Sheekh Adaan Yare, (Rahanweyn/Hadamo). For Gedo, the Amiir walaaya is Sheekh 'Baas 'Abdullaahi who was appointed late February in replacement of Mahamed Salaad (Galje'el).

Maktabatu I'laam is the ministry of Information. As discussed in details in the next chapter, al-Shabaab heavily invested in the multimedia sector like other Jihadi movements (such as the Taliban who at one point in the 1990s had been reluctant towards cell phones and laptops). Two main goals motivate them. First, a wish to propagate their ideology in Somalia and in the diaspora while making their (dubious) achievements known to the global Jihadi movement. Second and increasingly important, the need to counter the media developed by the TFG and AMISOM.

In the Banaadir Region, al-Shabaab has three FM radio and one TV Channel. The first one is *Quran Karim* Radio FM. It was a private radio which supported ICU and the Islamic insurgents against Ethiopia. Al-Shabaab took it over when its owner (Daahir Geele) joined the TFG and became minister of Information. The second is Somali Wayen Radio FM. It was a private entity but its staff refused to follow al-Shabaab directives which gave an argument to take it over. The third radio is HornAfrik Radio and TV. It was also a private entity, that al-Shabaab confiscated after a litigation among the shareholders. A last one can be mentioned for Mogadishu: GBC Radio and TV channel that followed the same history. The TV channel used by al-Shabaab in Mogadishu is GBC that it took over after Radio Barkulan (the AMISOM's radio) used one of its frequencies. At first, Hisbul Islaam requested the owner to close the facility but soon after al-Shabaab took over the place.

Al-Shabaab has also taken over a number of private FM radios in the regions it controls al-Andalus Radio for Kismaayo and lower Jubba, in Buulo Haawa (until early March 2011), in 'Eel Buur for Galgaduud, in Baydhabo for Bay.

The websites that currently support al-Shabaab are: http://Somalimemo.net, http://AmiirNuur.com; http://Somalimidnimo.com. Over the last years, al-Shabaab had developed other websites that were blocked such as http://Al-mujaahid.org; http://alqimmah.net (it was blocked but still is operating although the last report dates October 2010); http://aminarts.wetpaint.com,

Maktabatu Hasba is the Religious Police. It is based on a *hadith* (*al-amru bilma'aruuf wanahyi 'anil munkar*[26]) to enact justice on the spot: a number of children (not to mention adults) were beaten, some even killed because they had the audacity to watch the World Football Cup in June 2006, others because they wanted to go to a movie or play games in public places. As always, a simplistic, rigid and ritualistic understanding of religion created havoc among people who nonetheless were strong believers.

Maktabatu Maaliya is the ministry of Finance with a local and global outreach. This *Maktab* is less involved in raising local taxes than developing strategies to get access to major sources of funding. Internally as described in Chapter V, it is based on two main deeds: the collect of *zakaah* and *sadaqa fii sabiililaahi* ("for the sake of God") and the relations with proper business activities (one can guess, port services, charcoal export, etc.); for the outside world, it is again the mobilisation of wealthy donors and the fund-raising among the diaspora. This Maktab is chaired by Ibraahim Haaji Jaama' Mee'aad al-Afghani also called Abuu Zalma.

Conclusion

The most striking characteristic of al-Shabaab is its ability to evolve and adapt to new situations, despite being constantly under threat. This should be understood as a proof that this movement has emerged from a very specific history and that while it clearly benefits from external input, it also gains from a deep understanding of the Somali dynamics.

The coercive technologies this movement has mobilized to eliminate its opposition and curb any protests from the lay population can be analysed as a transplant of techniques used elsewhere (and maybe Iraq as much as Afghanistan), notably by Islamist movements, and a legacy of the brutalisation of the Somali society for more than 20 years.

Al-Shabaab built itself as the aspiring most powerful Islamist military group. To a large extent, its growth was framed in a dynamic of permanent confrontations. However, it was able to prove that it was eventually the most credible group, the one that people should fear because it was doing what it was claiming.

While it has been able to make this point repeatedly due to many miscalculations made by the international community, it has not been able to articulate a project of social and political transformation of the Somali society. This focus on the sole military dimension is a striking point that cannot be only explained by the continuing presence of foreign troops in the country. But politics is not only produced by discourses and explicit visions: it is also an outcome of necessities.

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[26] This *hadith* is crucial in the Wahhabi doctrine: "commanding the good and chasing evil". According to one interpretation, it provides the right (and the duty) to stop incorrect behaviour.

The bureaucratic structure of al-Shabaab has to be taken more seriously than the TFG State apparatus. It reflects a will to duplicate the organisation of other Jihadi movements (including al-Qâ'idah), the strong influence of foreigners who want to mitigate problems that always hindered the development of a Somali Jihadi group (clanism, warlordism and physical elimination by outsiders) and the de facto governing role of al-Shabaab.

While resources are put first and foremost in the military and security sectors, the need to (re)educate the population and to govern it without become prisoners of its internal tensions (or becoming again a full social actor and interacting with it) has convinced al-Shabaab leaders to build new institutions and procedures.

Whatever evaluations made on the ideological debates within al-Shabaab, the key question still is whether at one point ruling a population would create a political dynamic that would circumvent a mere militaristic Jihadi agenda.

CHAPTER II
THE CONFRONTATION WITH OTHER ISLAMIC TRENDS

Among the many misunderstandings that flourish on Somalia, one is that the Islamist or even Salafi trend is born in the civil war. This is untrue and just based on a vision of the pre-civil-war Somali society as secular as Siyaad Barre regime that was ruling it. While a full description of the development of those trends is beyond the scope of this study[27], one may keep in mind a number of patterns that helped the more militant section to survive the State coercion and build a constituency at least in margins of the Somali society from the 1980s. In particular, it inherited a culture of violence and secrecy that translated also in the way al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam behaved.

Throughout the first decade of the civil war, other dynamics also played an important role. The UNOSOM and the failure of al-Itihaad to make a breakthrough provoked a massive demobilisation of fighters. While a tiny minority was supportive of an Islamist agenda, most by adopting a strong Salafi stance found a way to rehabilitate themselves within the society: since they had become genuinely religious, they were not accountable for the crimes they had committed as militias. This adoption of new social codes was also conducive for business connections that were helpful in their economic success: Salafi business people first tried to help each others before looking for other partners. This behaviour helps understanding why in a matter of years they became so numerous in the business realm. While others played the individualistic cards, they reacted often as a committed safety net and built on their own success (thanks also to Gulf's funds). Those people in majority were not the most influential in the business realm: they often were shopkeepers and wholesalers with few dominant figures such as Ahmed Nuur 'Ali Jimaale, the CEO of al-Barakat holding. However, because of their number and their networking, they were instrumental to push well-known economic operators to promote the Islamic Courts and play publicly the religious card, though those latter were not always genuinely interested in developing political Islam.

This ideological proximity based on genuine beliefs or on opportunism was mobilised at different moments but al-Shabaab was not the last one to cultivate this economic strata and get human and financial support thanks to it. Their ability to do so was based on different strategies explored elsewhere (see Chapter III in particular) in this report but also on coercion and eliminating (even physically) potential competitors.

Clan politics was also a reason for some to stick on this religious stance: it was a legitimate, yet stark criticism of the factions and was not detrimental to securing properties and business deals. The business class that developed in the 1990s was an offspring of the informal economy of the 1980s, an expression of the protection economy reframed by the military factions and an agency of networks with outside supplying markets. In major markets, business people were requested to fund factions without having any leverage on what they were doing. Political Islam was an alternative to that situation.

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[27] Roland Marchal, "Islamic Political Dynamics in the Somali Civil War." in: *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, ed. A. de Waal. London: Hurst, 2004 and the more precise study of Z. M. *a History of the Somali Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah, FCO,* 2010.

Salafi militants were also active and the events following 9/11 provided more ground to their agenda than anytime before. In all those developments, secular political activists also played often a dubious role. While the Mogadishu based HornAfrik FM Radio appeared a very secular institution eventually sympathetic to Ethiopia to many in the mid 2000s, its managers played the Islamic card at different moments hoping to keep the upper hand on the Islamists while strengthening their influence and becoming the main political players.

A last (and minor) point can be made. Fashion is not foreign to the Somali culture. While most Somalis are believers, there are many ritual variations that could develop in specific social behaviours. When the Islamic Courts got the upper hand in Mogadishu, many Somalis bet on different religious factions and overnight became members of Salafi or Jihadi organisations like al-I'tisaam or al-Shabaab. Emotions prevailed on any other considerations and brought people into situations they had not foreseen.

While this argument is valid, the religious appeal is very powerful in a Muslim society like Somalia after 2001. At the difference of other Islamist trends that only had a conventional communication strategy to promote their views, al-Shabaab from the very beginning invested in *da'wa* and used the most modern technologies. One may believe that the expansion of internet in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia that took off significantly in 2004 played its role.

Let us now describe the relations with the various Islamist trends: al-Islaah, Majma' al-'ulemaa (or Ahlu Sheekh), Tabligh, al-I'tisaam and Takfiir wa Hijra. While the relations with the two last ones have been marked by ambiguity before open conflict, the general trend has been a very confrontational attitude up to elimination. Max Weber would have described this as a staunch attempt to get at all costs the monopoly of the salvation goods.

For the record, this behaviour is not exactly the stance supported by al-Qâ'idah that promotes a more conciliatory and pedagogical approach. This radicalism seems mostly motivated by the relative previous junior status of most of al-Shabaab leaders within the Somali Islamic movement and their weak religious background: it is amazing that the key figures have only a military background and none of them has ever published a pamphlet dealing with Jihadi issues. One can not dismiss the role played by foreigners but the "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi" model[28] was criticized even by Ayman al-Zawahiri (who happens to be more rigid than Ussama ben Laden)[29] and al-Qâ'idah in the Arabian Peninsula never endorsed it.

1. The Salafi divide

The main Islamist organisation in the 1990 in terms of social influence was al-Islaah[30]. Established in the 1980s, al-Islaah was ideologically close to the Egyptian Muslim Brothers. At the difference of other groups, it kept being a non armed movement but adapted its recruitment

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[28] In 2007, al-Shabaab thought about changing its name into Jamaa'a al-Tawhid wal Jihad, the same name of Zarqawi's organisation in 2004 (this later became al-Qâ'idah Jihad Organisation in the Land of the two Rivers) more than a year after.

[29] Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*, London, Hurst and Co. Peter Bergen, *op. cit.* 2011. Yet, the Iraqi insurgency is very different compared to the Somali one. Afghanistan provides a better point of comparison, though the regional context is radically different.

[30] Roland Marchal, "Islamic Political dynamics in the Somali Civil War" in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, London, Hurst, 2004, pp. 114-145. , 'Umar Imaan Abuubaker, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia [in Arabic]*, 2008, Cairo, Maktab Dar Fikr Arab [House of Arab Thought].

strategy to the war settings. While organisations such as al-Itihaad promoted a top-down strategy (control of the power to Islamize the society), al-Islaah bet on a civilian strategy that aimed at Islamizing the society to get an Islamic State. This was a good example of bottom up strategy so much liked by the NGO world in Somalia.

Logically, the conditions of recruitment were more flexible since the core aim was to involve socially influential people, which would motivate others to also join the movement. As there was no explicit determined ideology, different schools of thought could co-exist in the same movement. People from al-Itihaad were members as well as important economic operators who gained some social prestige by doing so. The political path of an Islamist like Dr 'Umar Imam Abuubaker (Hawiye/Badiadde) illustrates well this point. He was a member of al-Islaah, then al-Itihaad, then again al-Islaah, then al-I'tisaam; in 2006, he became a deputy of the ICU *Shura* chaired by Hasan Daahir and the first chairman of Hisbul Islaam in February 2009. Al-Islaah could be seen at that time as a rallying point for all Islamist schools of thought, a network of networks or even a bridge between them. As a consequence, al-Islaah became very influential in the school system (FPEN) and health facilities (thanks to funding provided by Gulf charities) and also among the Somali intellectuals, especially those employed by the UN and INGOs.

The 'Arta conference in 2000 was their pick of influence and as well the beginning of their predicament. The ambiguity of their membership was emphasized by different sectors of the Somali society and Ethiopia provided a pamphlet full of mistakes and confusions that made only one point: Islamists were all the same and a national threat to Ethiopia[31]. After 9/11, they had to make their views known and refused to endorse al-Qâ'idah views. But the true clarification came in 2006 while the factions were fighting the Islamic Courts. A mirror of the debate in June 1993 when Islamists had debated their conditional support to General Mahamed Faarah 'Aydiid, al-Islaah split on the issue of armed struggle and the support to the Islamists Courts. A section called *Damul Jedid* (New Blood) came out and endorsed the Islamic Courts, while al-Islaah kept neutral and increasingly vocal against the ICU "totalitarian" behaviour.

While ideologically both trends are far from al-Shabaab, one cannot dismiss the fact that at different moments, cooperation or acceptance was on the agenda mostly due to the war situation because of the Ethiopian occupation. But this apparent lull was not for long since al-Shabaab has a definite policy to get rid of socially influential people who differ religiously. The most important challenge for al-Islaah today is to be seen aloof of the political arena since the organisation has reservations on a number of key figures of the TFG and cannot face al-Shabaab.

Majma' al-'ulemaa and Ahlu Sheekh are two different names for the same cluster of people. The very simple fact that they endorsed Yuusuf Qaradawi stance on 9/11 made them from the very beginning potential enemies of al-Shabaab since they strongly disagreed with the concept of Jihad supported by al-Shabaab leaders. Yet, one should not be naïve. Someone like Adbulqaadir Jamaa' - a close adviser to TFG President from 2009 onward and currently a TFG minister - was at one point a member of al-Itihaad and personal ties are more powerful than any others. Al-Shabaab until December 2006 had a tense relation with that trend. The end of this difficult cohabitation occurred when Sheekh Shariif was arrested in Northern Kenya early January 2007 but treated well by Kenyan authorities thanks to an US request.

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[31] Medhane Tadesse, *Al-Ittihad: Political Islam and the Black Economy in Somalia"*, Addis-Ababa, Megan press, 2002.

Those organisations cannot be considered Salafi, though many of its members are. To a large extent, they have adopted the mainstream Islamic requirements for Jihad, which is not acceptable by organisations like al-Shabaab or al-Qâ'idah. Only then tactics put off the violent confrontation.

2. al-I'tisaam, Muqawama and the Salafi trend

As always in Somalia (and elsewhere) it is difficult to give ideology a major role in defining factions and making sense of their behaviour. For instance, al-Tabligh and al-Shabaab may actually have many religious commonalities since the Salafism of the latter is very close to the Deobandi doctrine of the former. Yet, they act in different ways. Al-Tabligh in Somalia promotes a ritualistic Islam but does not impose it on the people; most of its lectures deal with strictly religious issues; Jihad is rarely mentioned and, if the case, it is in its two meanings (holy war versus spiritual effort).

As explained in Chapter I, al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam are two different organisations. Yet, while ideologically al-I'tisaam is strongly endorsing Wahhabism and Jihad, the personal connections between people have often survived the different agendas, a difference that became often notional in front of the common threats they were facing. This is a very important aspect that sheds light on the influence of Hasan Daahir Aweys.

A second ambiguity deserves clarification. Al-I'tisaam claimed to be a Jihadi organisation but their ambitions were mainly national or at one point regional because of the Ethiopian region of Ogaden. This was the motto of Hasan 'Abdallah Hirsi Turki (Ogaadeen/Mahamed Zubeyr/Reer Isaaq) who claimed to have a Jihadi regional agenda while his recruits belong only to his clan. For many others, this Jihadi agenda meant only sympathy towards others Islamists involved in wars against the "West" and military ambitions concerning Somalia.

Over one decade, they indeed showed little stamina to promote an Islamic State in Alaska (as the regional governor of Lower and Middle Jubba Sheekh Hasan Ya'qub 'Ali said in an interview with Al-Jazera) and the cooperation for the terrorist attacks in Kenya in August 1998 and November 2002 seemed to not have involved significant sections of this group. The bravado of a Hasan Daahir Aweys claiming that he would free Guantanamo prisoners could hardly be taken seriously.

As said earlier, when *Mu'askar Mahkamad* was set up, many cadres of al-I'tisaam joined what became soon known as al-Shabaab. At that time, those were a minority within the Somali society and knew that they were targeted (and targeting...). Global events were not inciting to moderation: the discourse on the GWOT and Western policy in the Middle East could hardy get support from lay Muslims. Rallying into al-Shabaab was a military success but then came the ICU era and new arguments started to develop.

In October 2006, Sheekh Dr. Bashiir Ahmed Salaad (then chairperson of al-I'tisaam) was tasked to organise a meeting of all Islamist trends within the ICU to build a new umbrella organisation, al-Wifaq. This latter would be the place where all participating groups could settle differences before they become problems that stall the ICU. After a few months of existence, it was indeed clear that the ICU was not working properly and that differences got bitter even among Islamists, while the situation required a strong cohesion since Ethiopia was already in Baydhabo and popular support for the ICU dissipating. Mukhtaar Roobow and Ahmed Godane who attended

the gathering left in fury and, as usual, the meeting was denounced by 'Aadan 'Ayrow who called its participants *murtadin* (apostates, not least!). Al-Wifaq was a born dead organisation but his chairman did not appreciate al-Shabaab behaviour.

The war against Ethiopia was another motive of division. After a five-day fighting in Mogadishu in spring 2007, it became clear that the confrontation against Ethiopia and the TFG would take longer and that a political expression of the Resistance was needed. Asmara did play a strategic role in setting up the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in which the former ICU (and Islamist) cadres had the biggest influence. Al-Shabaab reacted negatively even before the foundation meeting took place in Asmara and kept criticizing the new organisation after, although a number of known al-Shabaab operatives (including Mukhtaar Roobow and Khaliif 'Adale) were present in Asmara. Talks to narrow differences took place early 2008 in Galgaduud but brought no solution, especially because the ARS leadership (including Hasan Daahir Aweys) were already discussing a possible dialogue with the TFG and the international community.

The ARS divisions were expected and just reinforced al-Shabaab. While the Djibouti process took place, al-Shabaab grew thanks to ICU defectors who believed that the ARS was bought by either Eritrea or Western powers. The conclusion of the Djibouti process was the departure of a group of former ICU cadres to the TFG and the subsequent creation of Hisbul Islaam. Ethiopia left the country early January 2009 and the Islamists needed a fresh assessment of the new political situation.

Contradictions developed on two fronts. Politically again there was a new attempt to mend the rifts between the former ICU leadership. Dr. Bashiir Ahmed chaired a new committee to organize a mediation process and his work was again bitterly criticised and labelled by al-Shabaab. This was another blow to the face of a well-known Islamist who had more religious credentials than his critics.

Militarily the cooperation between al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islaam commanders went cold and then degenerated quickly. The main argument became the control of Kismaayo administration, the port city that had been taken over by a loose alliance of al-Shabaab and Raas Kambooni fighters in August 2008. The deal was that each faction had a 6 month mandate on the city but, unsurprisingly, al-Shabaab refused to honour the agreement when its period was over. Meanwhile, a number of Raas Kambooni commanders rallied al-Shabaab (money might have been involved) and at one point the deputy and son-in-law of Hasan Turki, Ahmed Madoobe, called for a military confrontation between Hisbul Islaam and al-Shabaab since the negotiations were at a standstill. Once more, Hasan Daahir tried to buy time and deflect the fighting. The end result was the collapse of Raas Kambooni to the extent that its leader (in poor health), Hasan Turki, had to join al-Shabaab early February 2010 at a time he had become politically irrelevant[32] while his son-in-law became a surrogate military actor of Kenya in the border area.

A next step in framing an opposition to al-Shabaab was the Garoowe Conference early March 2010. Local religious authorities, Sheekh 'Ali Warsame who had been the first leader of al-Itihaad, members of al-I'tisaam and again Dr. Bashiir Ahmed gathered in the Puntland capital

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[32] The agreement between the two organisations is actually interesting since it states that an Islamic State should be set up in the Horn (including Ethiopia) – which was the goal of Hasan Turki- but that the jihad has no borders as al-Qâ'idah. Hasan Turki joined because he had no other opportunity: join the TFG was unacceptable and he could not leave the country since he is searched by the US and others. The lack of political space benefited once more al-Shabaab?

and after lengthy discussions declared that Jihad in Puntland had no sense and should not be carried out. Al-Shabaab should not destabilise the rest of Somalia, neither Puntland nor Somaliland. This infuriated al-Shabaab that has always had problems to religiously justify its political choices.

But this event was followed by another one that brought an open antagonism between al-Shabaab and respected Sheekhs who until then had, openly or less openly, endorsed its Jihad against AMISOM and the TFG. In the jargon, many 'ulemaa who were supportive of Salafi Jihadism seemed to shift toward what is called a Salafi Jedid stance defined by a more civilian approach and the refusal of calling for Jihad[33].

As a consequence of the elimination of Raas Kambooni, a faction of ONLF (the heirs of the former Western Somali Liberation Front led by Sheekh 'Ismaan Dheere who was also a Raas Kambooni commander) engaged in talks with Addis-Ababa and made a deal since the cohabitation with al-Shabaab was becoming impossible under the new conditions[34]. The most respected Salafi religious figures in Kenya who used to be closed to al-Shabaab, Sheekh Mahamed 'Abdi Umul and Sheekh Mahamuud Sheekh Mahamed Shibili, supported the agreement while, once more, al-Shabaab condemned it fiercely and organised a campaign against them in its medias and even through a association *Baraaruga Islaamka* (Islamic Awakening) linked to al-Shabaab in the USA.

Just before the beginning of Ramadan in August 2010, both Sheekh made speeches about the Khawarij in Nairobi mosques. Without mentioning al-Shabaab, they pointed out commonalities and reminded the huge audience that the Khawarij should not be considered Muslims (at the difference of the Shi'a)[35]. The term "Khawarij" means in Arabic those who "withdraw" from the community"[36]. Their faith was characterized by Puritanism and fanaticism, strictness in matter of belief and the observance of customs. Their view was that any non-Khariji Muslim was a heretic, and they included the holy war (*Jihad*) as one of the main pillars of Islam. They also allowed the killing of Muslims and their wives and children whom they considered heretics. For the mainstream Sunni, therefore, this term has a negative connotation because the image of the Khawarij continues to be that of divisive groups outside the consensus made up of anarchists or zealots who are impatient and intolerant. This was a very serious blow to al-Shabaab because it had lost in a matter of months the support of influential 'ulemaa and other religious figures who had been very close or members of al-I'tisaam.

One should wonder why those events took place so quickly after years of ideological lull. Although this has to be cross-checked, the authors intend to believe that 40 influential Salafi 'ulemaa were invited by Saudi Arabia to attend the Haaj pilgrimage in December 2009 and came

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[33] The website http://somaliswisstv.com/ provides the texts of the fatwa.

[34] http://hornofafrica-abdikarim.blogspot.com/2011/01/ethiopia-agreement-between-onlf-and.html

[35] to add to the polemics, they actually called the Khawarij "dogs of hell", a message difficult to convey to al-Sabaab…

[36] It refers to a group of early Muslims who were originally allied with the followers of Ali Ibn Abi Talib when the latter ruled as the fourth Caliph after Prophet Mohamed and led a military campaign in Siffin in the year 657 against Muawiya Ibn Abi Sufyan, who would later establish the Umayyad Caliphate. When Ali received Muawiya's proposal to arbitrate the dispute, a group made up of Bedouin combatants broke away from Ali's camp, demanding that the fighting continue until Allah resolves the issue between the two enemies. 'Ali was subsequently forced to fight these Khawarij, but he did not manage to overcome them. They continued to operate in various locations in the Muslim world, trying to impose their principles on those around them.

back in a different mood concerning the nature of the fighting in Somalia. This, if true, might be only a partial answer.

A pick of those strains could be illustrated by the death of Ahmed 'Ali Huseen Keyse executed mid February by al-Shabaab. One explanation heard often in Nairobi in that period was that it was the revenge by the group led by Mukhtaar Roobow. This latter reacted against the killing of one of his close friends and kinsmen (the victim was indeed Leysan) in August 2010 in Baydhabo by a Shabaab Isaaq Commander under the allegation that the former was cooperating with the TFG and AMISOM. Ahmed Keyse was allegedly targeted by them because he was a close associate of Ahmed Godane. This version does not make much sense.

Ahmed Keyse was a leading member of al-I'tisaam and joined Shabaab in 2006 as many others. Although he is Isaaq/Eidegalle and therefore seen in south Somalia close to Ahmed Godane for that mere reason, one cannot expect of someone near to the Shabaab's leader to travel freely to Djibouti (2009) and Hargeysa (2010) and walk alone in Bakaraaha market (at the time he was arrested in January 2011). Moreover, Ahmed Keyse was kept in jail for more than a week before getting sentenced: Godane had plenty of time to save him at the difference of what happened in Baydhabo in August 2010 when Roobow's friend was killed on the spot.

A more serious explanation can be based on our previous argument: the relations between al-I'tisaam and al-Shabaab have gone from bad to worse over the last months and there won't be any reconciliation. One can add the need for the Shabaab leadership to contain the expressions of sympathy toward Hasan Daahir Aweys that followed the "merging" of Hisbul Islaam and Shabaab late December 2010 (read below). Last but not least, one should also not completely dismiss the possibility that Ahmed Keyse was entertaining relations with the TFG and others.

3. The merging with Hisbul Islaam (December 2010)

As witnessed different times over the years, the relations between Hasan Daahir Aweys and the founding members of al-Shabaab have been marked by indecision, anger and sympathy. Aadan Haashi 'Ayrow became head of the 'Ayr Islamic Court militias (Hifka Halane) thanks to the old Islamist leader who did not antagonize his actions for months. Later on, at different moments, Hasan Daahir tried to find common ground while he was losing people or had to pay for the consequences of al-Shabaab unilateral actions. On 21st December 2006, while meeting with Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development, he was trying to get a sense of the fighting that had started the same morning.

It will be easy, as journalists do, to remind readers that he had been on the US (then UN, then EU) terror list from September 2001 and had had relations with al-Qâ'idah people from the early 1990s. Therefore, despite some disagreements, there is no surprise of a long comradeship between him and this organisation he contributed to create[37]. In that view, he would appear as either an unconscious leader or a victim of his own creation.

Without entering into too many details, one can say that his main principle was to keep the unity of a movement at a time he thought his Islamist project was threatened by different foreign

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[37] This is typically an outcome of the "religion of the list": no facts are needed and no analysis required. As we know, the US and the international community never make mistake nor play politics with the management of terrorism…

interventions. Although he has been a dedicated Salafi, he still proves some flexibility coping with situations when al-Shabaab leadership would overreact. He shows respect to elders even when he disagrees with them and, from time to time, expresses even open minded views (and also al-Shabaab compatible statements). In September 2006, when an Italian nun was killed in Mogadishu, he went on air to say that foreigners working for the Somali population such as the late nun should be welcomed and protected. Not an easy speech in front of al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab also had a long term plan to recruit all Islamists under its flag without compromising at all on its own ideology and structure of leadership. The concept was more monopolising the religious legitimacy than building a large front to defeat the TFG and its foreign allies.

Arguments with 'Aadan 'Ayrow and later with Ahmed Godane were numerous on petty and strategic issues throughout 2006-2010. When the ARS was to be established, al-Shabaab leadership became highly sarcastic and criticized the "old man" for his allegiance to clan and his tolerance towards secular people. Yet, Hasan Daahir had a name and was respected by many al-Shabaab commanders who had been members of al-Itihaad or al-I'tisaam.

The turning point was the defeat of Raas Kambooni. From that period on, the time life of Hisbul Islaam was counted. As for other factions, what al-Shabaab did was to dismantle piece by piece Hisbul Islaam structure, by buying local commanders, killing others and taking over important places from its rival movement. The last step was the taking over of Buur Hakaba, followed the following weeks by Luuq and Afgooye in December 2010. This was the military end of the movement.

Yet, timing was important. After the failure of the Ramadan 2010 offensive, al-Shabaab leadership entered into a bitter argument (see below). Ahmed Godane and his supporters were willing to downplay the role of Mukhtaar Roobow and Sheekh 'Ali Dheere by introducing another key figure that would compete with them: Hasan Daahir. It was also the hope to bring experienced fighters to al-Shabaab after the Ramadan defeat.

When discussions started early October 2010, Hisbul Islaam was not weak enough and Hasan Daahir still in a position to disagree. The Hisbul Islaam negotiating team put only two conditions: the name of the new organisation should be changed and a new leader appointed. It kindly proposed that al-Shabaab provided a list of 5 or 3 names and selection would be made by Hisbul Islaam. This was not acceptable and the discussions were cut for a while, until Hisbul Islaam lost its last important base in Buur Hakaba.

What Ahmed Godane had not envisioned because of his contempt for the old leader, was that Hasan Daahir was old indeed but also a living memory of the Somali Islamic movement. Suddenly, al-I'tisaam commanders who had joined al-Shabaab came to congratulate him while Mukhtaar Roobow, Sheekh 'Ali Dheere and even Fu'aad Shongole who had personal scores to settle with Godane sided with him and endorsed his request to get international assistance to cope with the drought. This request was echoing a fatwa by Dr. Bashiir Ahmed and other al-I'tisaam 'ulemaa who said that international humanitarian aid was allowed and those forbidding it bad Muslims. This was too much public divergence with the official al-Shabaab stance and provoked an internal shake up (see next section).

However, Hasan Daahir was also useful for al-Shabaab beyond this tug-of-war. The new TFG cabinet mistreated the 'Ayr clan (at least that was the common perception among that clan) and

Hasan Daahir could hopefully create a new momentum in favour of al-Shabaab. That is why in February 2011 new positions were given to al-Shabaab commanders who belong to that clan.

Beyond these competitions among the leadership the merging of the two groups is not going to benefit much to al-Shabaab while it constitutes one more blow to the TFG. The international community (at least at the time of the Djibouti process) considered those behind Hasan Daahir (either as *Muqawama* or as Hisbul Islaam), very close to al-Shabaab. But, the truth of the matter is that Hisbul Islaam has always been very close to the (new) TFG. A good illustration of that point is that most defectors went from one group to the other, rarely to al-Shabaab. A more open attitude to Hasan Daahir and his supporters in Asmara and Somalia may have brought a quite different result. But Sheekh Shariif was so nicely moderate…

Hisbul Islaam militias were not very different from the clan militias – in particular they are more experienced than the average al-Shabaab fighters, to the extent that few felt the mood to help al-Shabaab fight against ASWJ in Galgaduud (as far as Sufism is concerned). Although some are genuine Salafi and even close to al-Shabaab, most chew *qaat,* smoke cigarettes and play strong clan allegiance. When the two organisations merged, many preferred to shift to the TFG than to go back to a training camp and cope with lectures by Sheekhs appointed by al-Shabaab.

This characteristics help understand also why many people moved from the Afgooye corridor back to TFG area in Mogadishu. While they knew how to deal with Hisbul Islaam militias without changing their social habits, the take-over by al-Shabaab was not a promise of compromise.

4. **The collusion with Takfiir wa Hijra**

In Somalia, as in many other Muslim countries, an organisation claiming to be a clone of the Egyptian Takfiir wa Hijra developed before the civil war. That movement did not manage to grow in the country. Because the Somali social fabric had not degenerated so far as to deprive family and clan relations of any value, enforcing the project of a counter-society was as a result nearly impossible, and only a small cluster of militants could accept such a new way of life. In 2004, Takfiir wa Hijra only controlled one mosque in Mogadishu, and this was due more to its military strength than to popular acceptance.

Although the connection between al-Shabaab and this group dates from Aadan Haashi 'Ayrow (cf. Italian cemetery in January 2005) and Somalis until now debate whether 'Aadan 'Ayrow and Ahmed Godane belong to that movement [38]. Yet, one should not forget the strong dogmatic difference between the two movements[39]. Al-Shabaab calls people *murtadin* (apostates) based on their political stance while Takfiir wa Hijra has a deeply rooted theological definition of the right way. This implies that at the personal level, relations may not be so warm between al-Shabaab commanders and their Takfiir colleagues despite a common will to fight the TFG and AMISOM.

The Takfiir group may actually consider some of its associates just as bad Muslims as the TFG supporters. There is however a theological justification to such an alliance. The Prophet always benefited from the support of his grand father, Abu Talib, who was not a Muslim. Ibn Taymiyyah

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[38] The authors are divided on the answer.

[39] there is a distinction between *Takfiir bil Hukum* and *Takfiir bil 'Aqiida* according to the emphasis put on the individual versus the State and society.

indicates that in time of war one should choose a strong military leader even if his faith has weaknesses more than a great *'alim* whose leadership's capacity would be weak[40]. Even radicalism has its flexibility.

The first public clash between the two groups occurred just after the Shamo Hotel bombing on December 3rd, 2009. For what the authors have been told repeatedly, the bombing was decided by al-Shabaab leadership who then was struck by the popular outrage because of the death of innocent medical students and, among others, of a respected educationist, Ibraahim Hasan 'Addoow[41]. Therefore, it decided to distance itself from the bombing.

Takfiir considered this move as a genuine betrayal: the one who committed suicide was *shahiid* and should have been praised accordingly. This stance was logical due to their theological understanding: the students were as infidels as the TFG ministers killed. Political opportunism was not allowed. The argument went bitter until other serious problems in the conduct of the war got on the top of their agenda but no common agreement was ever found on this case.

At the opposite of what AMISOM and others said, the authors intend to believe that the attempt to create an organisation called Millet Ibraahim in the following months was either a pure scam by TFG and/or some of its international friends or materialized the will of Takfiir to create its own trend within Shabaab. In any case, it failed.

Some other military clashes happened and attested unsolved tensions. In May 2010, a grenade was launched in a Takfiir mosque in Kismaayo, a couple of days after Fu'aad Shongole was wounded in the bombing of his mosque in Bakaraaha market. The possibility of a manipulation cannot be completely dismissed.

In the same period a high ranking Shabaab/Takfiir official, Dhoobley police chief Da'uud 'Ali Hasan, was arrested and executed in Kismaayo on March 20th, 2010. There are two interpretations of that event: one based on clan; the other on conflicting ideologies. At the end of a clash against Ahmed Madoobe's forces at Diif base near Dhoobley, three prisoners were made by this officer and executed despite an explicit order from the Dhoobley Governor Sheekh Mahamed Arab to keep them alive. The clan reading is that this latter as the three prisoners belong to the same Ogaadeen sub-clan as Ahmed Madoobe, Mahamed Zubeyr, while the commander on the ground belongs to another Ogaadeen sub-clan, 'Owlyahan. This is why the Dhoobley police chief can be accused to have settled clan scores and *diyya* (blood money, *mag* in Somali) was not accepted though proposed. The ideological reading is that a Takfiir member is not supposed to show mercy in front of people allied with the West. Takfiir leaders said that their fellow member was killed because he was Takfiir though one can also claim that he disobeyed an explicit order and did not respect the chain of command.

In Qansardheere, Takfiir built a mosque that quickly after was taken over by al-Shabaab forces in fall 2009 and transformed into a police station since another mosque was already available for the inhabitants. This was perceived as a further humiliation by the Takfiir leadership who claimed that that was the fifth incident of this kind.

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[40] Ahmed Ibn Taymiyyah, *Alsiyasa alsharciya fii islaax alraacee w alraaciyat* (in Arabic), Beirut, Maktab 'Asriya, 2008 [1328].

[41] He was the main figure of Haber Gidir/Sa'ad Islamists (he actually belonged to Reer Nimaale). He was in charge of the ICU foreign relations. Initially among the hardliners, he ended that period with more flexible and realistic views.

When Shabaab took over Buulo Haawa in October 2009, Takfiir fighters were numerous in its ranks and files. An important decision for the lay people was that all animals should be slaughtered in a specific place under the instruction of a Shabaab Sheekh who happened to be Takfiiri. It did not take long for tensions to rise because of the contempt he treated the lay people with. After several complains, al-Shabaab higher Commander visited Buulo Haawa and dismissed the Sheekh but also allowed local people to slaughter their animals at home if this was only for private consumption. Again, one may argue that there were two different problems: one being the obligation to slaughter animals in a defined place; the other to do so under a Takfiiri Sheekh.

In February 2011, more than 100 relatives of Takfiir fighters and Sheekhs were arrested in Merka and Wanlaweyn (Lower Shabeelle). It should be noted that no official charges against them was made and only a Wanlaweyn Sheekh made a controversial statement on their "un-Islamic" practices. Before the merging, this area was under Hisbul Islaam control: this could explain why a looting took place after the Takfiir people were arrested.

There are basically two different explanations of this situation. Both are worth considering though the authors believe that the first one – very much promoted by the TFG and some in the international community – does not encompass all elements and overemphasizes a leadership crisis that, at this stage, cannot materialize for reasons explained below. Debates, contradictions, ego confrontations and arguments should be seen as the daily plate in any armed or political movements, including the Salafi Jihadi groups: one needs more to get a split.

The first one emphasizes a strong leadership crisis among al-Shabaab organization and the ongoing attempt by Takfiir to reorganise itself within the movement to have better leverage and more influence. Of course, such a move cannot be allowed by al-Shabaab current leaders since other trends would take the same path. Therefore, the current repression and humiliation.

The authors' preferred explanation (at this stage) is that the moving element is the absolute need of al-Shabaab to recover popular support. This decision to put under arrest many Takfiiri is therefore connected to other elements of Shabaab politics: for instance the astonishing speech made by Mukhtaar Abu Zubeyr late January 2011, just after Fu'aad Shangole's even more surprising (see below). To a large extent, al-Shabaab has to cope with an ideological war and seems to have lost several battles in 2010 when Salafi Jihadi Sheekhs shifted their support and suggested many similarities between Shabaab as the Khawarij, as described in the previous section.

Over the last two months, al-Shabaab has tried to reassert itself as a fully Sunni organisation (therefore the arrest of Takfiiri people seen by most Somalis as the Khawariij's heirs) yet hostile to any compromise with other political Islamic trends (therefore the killing of several members of al-Wifaq and al-I'tisaam such as Sheekh 'Eel Buur, Sheekh Kashka, and Sheekh Mohamed Tahliil who was also very close to Hasan Daahir Aweys) that had successfully cornered Godane's group in 2010. The bad management of the drought increased the unpopularity of Shabaab and therefore reinforced the need to react forcefully to counter this stage of the public opinion (as often heard in Nairobi, "Somalis are leaving Islam because of al-Shabaab", not the best way for the latter to reach paradise).

5. An apolitical jihad?

Al-Shabaab is born as a military populist Jihadi organisation, whose aim was not so easy to decipher. At first, until the Ethiopian intervention, its behaviour was characterized by Salafi zeal and a policy of intimidation that was unfamiliar in Somalia. Throughout that period, people got to know about those who had been killed by al-Shabaab (or its members) long before the organisation emerged in 2005.

Yet, they were cooperating with other groups and their Jihadi statements were not taken so seriously since the situation on the ground was difficult and few people envisioned a political or even military agenda that could encompass more than Somalia and its immediate peripheries. In that sense, they were not different from other groups such as Hasan Turki's Raas Kambooni that also had a Jihadi agenda but restrained to the Ethiopian Ogaden Region (and Somalia).

The period of the Islamic Courts showed also that al-Shabaab leadership was not politically united even if they shared the same vision of Islamic requirements. On a number of important issues, serious differences emerged among them. The prohibition of *qaat* or the creation of al-Wifaq split them in tumultuous manner: Mukhtaar Roobow requested Hasan Daahir to convince 'Ayrow and Abuu Qutaybah that the killers of the Italian nurse should be arrested in September 2006 or even asked the same to arrest 'Ayrow when the *qaat* prohibition was enforced. Later, again the debates were hot and bitter when the ARS was created as some were for a more compromising attitude than Ahmed Godane. When two French (not so) secret agents were hijacked in July 2009 in Mogadishu and, at one point, held by Hisbul Islaam militias, Mukhtaar Roobow made clear that he would not fight to get the two hostages as ordered by Ahmed Godane: as he said, " we won't kill Muslims or die for kaafir". In the following weeks, one of his supporters lost Baydhabo governorship at the benefit of a commander close to Ahmed Godane.

As the TFG and other Somalis are eager to describe al-Shabaab at the edge of collapsing, the evidence provided is often sketchy. The authors fundamentally disagree with such a version today though their own data are not deprived of flaws for sure.

A number of issues have been discussed again and again over time and seem to have played a role in a new outburst of divisions over the last months. There are quoted here but one should read them carefully. Many organisations faced a pugnacious internal debate and confrontation of egos motivated by personal ambitions is the norm not the exception. As often, we should not assess the factions by labelling them moderates or extremists but by assessing the concrete impacts their stances could have on the ground within or outside the organisation. Among key divisive issues, one can quote the following bearing in minds the caveats just mentioned.

The first one is the nature of the Islamic State. This question is actually not so simple. On the one hand, Ayman Zawahiri acknowledged in his autobiography that the most important strategic goal of al-Qâ'idah was to regain control of a State or part of a State somewhere in the Muslim world since without that the jihadi agenda is very fragile[42]. Yet, ruling a population requires a number of political conditions that may contradict or amend a Jihadi project. Which area should be considered to do it? Which organisation of the State, which definition of the citizenry? Over the last five years what we have witnessed is a balancing discourse of al-Shabaab; at some point in the euphoria of popular support and military victories the announcement that this step would follow and in other moments a clear focus on the sole military activity.

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[42] See Peter Bergen, *The Longest War. The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda*, New York, Free Press, 2011.

Interestingly, there are differences between what is claimed in terms of discourse and what is achieved on the ground. Looking at what is happening in the Somali regions they control, one may have the feeling that they actually build a State of some kind by doing things that were not done before. To give a few examples, not only are they securing the territory and collecting taxes but they stress social differentiation, the different nature of the authority, the power of the public realm compared to private arrangements (see chapter IV for details and comments). The compromise with the sole military approach is that most of what they are doing is eventually focused on the security dimension. For instance, the enforcement of certain regulations at work places and the rehabilitation of some infrastructures have side effects that are important (and sometimes positive) for the population but the reason al-Shabaab undertook those works has been primarily military.

Another aspect is the national/regional/global agenda. Clearly, most of the leaders seem interested in Somalia, though they pay lip service to the global Jihad. This has several implications. First, this lack of interest does not mean that territory controlled by al-Shabaab is not used by global Jihadists. As explained before, they are embedded in various bureaucratic entities that manage the movement organs and are not only involved in the military sector, either as fighters or trainers. They therefore can act decisively. But the next question is what can they do without a tacit support from their Somali friends? On the Somali side, the call is not yet to go and wage Jihad in Tanzania or South Africa, it is actually to fight global Jihad inside Somalia. To a large extent for the authors, the presence of Ethiopia and AMISOM on the Somali soil has allowed the various views on local/regional/global Jihads to merge into a decision to promote Jihad at the regional level because, indeed, the Somali crisis has become a regional crisis and the Western interests are well entrenched in the policies of neighbouring States.

A third aspect that provoked turmoil in the organisation in September 2010 is the actual military strategy and its human costs. Al-Shabaab may need the war to keep its propaganda machine active and justify its harsh tactics in controlling civilians. Yet, especially in Mogadishu, many incidents look senseless and do not impact on the military balances of forces despite huge loses. One may talk about a combat Darwinism.

If those killed go to paradise and meet their *hural'ayn*[43], what about those wounded, even if they got some money as a symbolic compensation? This is a difficult issue for any army in the world and al-Shabaab is no exception to that since it has not the means to care about those injured and no discourse to counter the negative impact of this sad reality on the youth and the civilian population at large.

The last debate worth mentioning here is the actual policy toward the population. Al-Shabaab has not a limitless manpower and the politics of fear it uses to rule the population corresponds to both its ideological project of correcting popular Islam and the need to save resources while enforcing its authority. This assertion may be true but does not say much about the way clan elders should be treated and local non political grievances answered.

Over the last six months, these questions were again raised all together because of the military defeat in Mogadishu, the slowing of the Jihadi discourse, the growth of incidents with the population in areas they control and the inability to answer properly to the drought while at the same time forbidding humanitarian access. These questions are not new but seemed suddenly

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[43] The females found in Paradise: "[In beauty] these women are like rubies and small pearls" (Quran, 55:58).

more important because of the merging with Hisbul Islaam and the personality of Hasan Daahir Aweys.

The drought came at a difficult time for al-Shabaab. Suddenly, it was facing its own limitations because of its dogmatic stances. Not only was humanitarian access not allowed but al-Shabaab turned very suspicious against even the diaspora's will to support their relatives. This (initial) bad management of the drought increased the unpopularity of Shabaab and therefore reinforced the need to react forcefully to counter this stage of the public opinion.

Al-Shabaab stance could be explained not only by its dogmatism and the little care it has of its own population. Al-I'tisaam leadership and other religious clerics made a fatwa to declare legitimate any aid to those starving to death. At the same time, the West was overreacting at the finding of a UN Monitoring Group report despite its omissions and flaws. Al-Shabaab had to react to allegations that it was diverting up to 50% of the food aid. The best answer was to forbid it.

The political cost was tremendous for al-Shabaab. People demonstrated in several towns that were for months under its control. Elders were beaten or arrested, some youth even killed. The combat Darwinism was evolving into a mere Darwinism. The organisation needed time for reacting concretely (it did so, see chapter IV) but the first priority was to cool down the situation.

It is in that context that the last episode of public arguments took place in January 2011. First the opposition to the official line was expressed as key figures like Fu'aad Shongole. Hasan Daahir made vibrant speeches that clearly contradicted al-Shabaab decisions on drought and repression. While Ethiopia official websites announced mid-January that Ahmed Godane had been overthrown and replaced by Ibraahim al-Afghani, a much more interesting dynamic was taking shape. Ahmed Godane made an impressive speech to reassert his leadership late January and in a matter of two weeks after both Fu'aad Shongole and Hasan Daahir retracted their previous statements… Let us review the events in more details.

Fu'aad Shongole, on 25th January, made a speech that was highly surprising for a Salafi Jihadist. He basically stated that militias should not punish on the spot people they believe do not behave according to Islaam. Only the Courts and the Sheekhs, not the commanders, could make a decision. He also advises militias not to identify every wrongdoer with *murtad* (apostate). He also added that whoever fights Jihad should show his face, a staunch personal criticism of Ahmed Godane's behaviour.

The response of Ahmed Godane came only a few days after and was on two levels. First, because he still controls the bureaucratic apparatus, the military, the security, the funding and the nominations in the regions, he allowed a number of people who could be seen as the rivals of those "dissidents" to have a greater public role to show that alternatives existed. Second and the most impressively, he delivered a speech that contained four important points: the militias should not overreact[44], education is better than punishment; the regional governors, the *Amiir wilaaya*, are responsible if things go wrong; public good and properties should be respected by everyone. In the following days, a number of regional figures were transferred to other duties.

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[44] In his point 5, he mentions *dulqat* and *dimirin* which can be translated by tolerance or «open mind-ness ». The point 7 of the discourse also would deserve detailed comments.

These moves should be interpreted within a broader context. For the first time, al-Shabaab seems to grasp that it has lost the popular support it enjoyed at a point in time and that this creates a situation that may dramatically weaken the organisation because of the new offensive.

Conclusion

It would be paradoxical that in a context when all Islamist groups have had to reassess their political agenda, al-Shabaab keeps being the same organisation as it has been over the last two years. While the focus on the military dimension is again the highest priority, one should not exclude the possibility of some amendments – not only at the rhetorical level - in the next weeks and months.

Al-Shabaab seems more aware of its ideological defeat since a number of influential figures of the Salafi-Jihadi doctrine have shifted to a more civilian approach. By far and large, except if the internationalisation of the conflict grows and pushed those 'ulemaa to review their stances, it is a strategic defeat for al-Shabaab leaders. Today they are on the defensive and have to respond on two levels.

They have to prove that they belong to Sunni Islam and that the population needs them as much as they need the population. One may expect that the system put in place to assist the victims of the drought is kept functioning, this time to set up more social services than today. This, by itself, does not mean that al-Shabaab will change its core practices of coercion. It may only assess in a more efficient manner their social cost and without any doubt, use its most terrorist techniques to undo through fear the fragile military successes obtained by AMISOM/Ethiopia/TFG/ASWJ….

CHAPTER III
CITIZENS OF JIHAD. AL-SHABAAB'S RECRUITMENT

Al-Shabaab started as a populist militaristic organization devoted to Jihad. The very notion that al-Shabaab might rule a territory on a permanent basis at first was an abstraction since from the beginning its leadership had faced imminent physical threats. From June 2006 until now, it has made strides, learning from interactions with others. The first lesson it drew was that in order to survive, al-Shabaab had to become socially embedded, with the implications explained below. Another was that the very notion of Jihad must be prioritized in a way that is sustainable in the medium term, not just in the heat of battle. The third lesson is that to wage Jihad, al-Shabaab needed to rule a land and a population. Although the points may seem clear, their implementation creates different dynamics and occasionally contradictions, according to local conditions and leadership qualities. These may translate in accepting substantial local differences or in condemning commanders who would appear as crossing the red line because of their sudden greater acceptance of Somali customs[45].

The description hereafter gives a view of how three main tools used by al-Shabaab function in its recruitment process. The first one is *da'wa* and *muhadara* (orientation) that have a strong impact on the youth because of their age and their lack of religious knowledge. This emotional dimension could be reinforced by the use of videos that stress even more the rewards for waging Jihad. A second important point is the economic motivation. Unfortunately, Somalis got used to a violent environment and the gaps or the social prohibitions linked to the use of extreme violence are weakened. Economic reward for killing people (who happened to be described as apostates) is therefore not conceived as faulting major prohibitions and belonging to al-Shabaab is a way to secure revenues for his/her nuclear family. A third tactic used by al-Shabaab is a smart process of de-socialisation/re-socialisation of the young recruits. As explained below this has a number of consequences that could be positive (unifying the militias) or negative (provoking more resentment from the lay population) for the organisation. A last aspect should be underlined: although al-Shabaab fights for the control of Somali locations hardly known to the outside world (with all due respect to Shangani or Diif), its narrative of the war connects its members with global events and issues. To put it this way, the GWOT closed the doors of many countries to Somalis but Jihad is opening others.

This chapter is organized the following way. A first part looks at what al-Shabaab could offer to individuals. While many narratives emphasized forced recruitment of youth and coerced adults, the authors believe that this would be a too easy explanation for skills that clearly mobilize different technologies and discourses in the context of the Somali civil war. A second section looks at how the media policy they had developed is congruent with their recruitment. A third section may bring fresher data in the sense that it explores the relations between clans and al-Shabaab and tries to make sense of the claim often heard that al-Shabaab recruits in the "minorities" (whatever this term means in a Somali context). The conclusion is that the legacy of al-Shabaab – if this organisation disappear (an unlikely scenario today for the authors) – could be

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[45] This is fostered by the constraints on communications between the leadership and local commanders. Communications between key leaders have to be kept minimal, especially the use of telecommunications, as al-Shabaab leadership is rightly convinced that the Western Security Services are monitoring calls. This also explains differences: consultation requires time which is not always available.

either positive or as concerning as its existence depending the way al-Shabaab would be defeated.

1. Joining al-Shabaab

It is difficult to draw a complete and fair outline of the reasons why people are part of such a Salafi Jihadi organisation. Two basic misreadings should be avoided.

The first one is to believe that compulsory recruitment is the norm not the exception. This view is congruent with Western values but does hardly reflect the truth. People should also compare al-Shabaab with other ultra-violent armed groups such as the Mozambique's RENAMO or the Sierra Leone's RUF to understand the complexity of any genuine answer. This does not mean that people queue to get incorporated into the movement but that the balance between free choice and coercion is often very complicated and based on structural motivations (that can be analysed) and personal drivers that are highly dependent of the individuals and the very context in which they live at the time of decision.

While the authors believe that, in average, conscription has not been performed with guns (but with Sheekhs), there are periods when it took place through pure coercion. Last February and early March 2011, al-Shabaab got surprised by the magnitude of the offensives in Mogadishu, Gedo and Bakool and the amount of its losses. Compulsory recruitment was performed in many areas in and outside Mogadishu and even elders were forced to join a fight for which they had little appetite.

A second mistake is to over rationalise the choices made by many recruits. It should be clear that very few have a decent understanding of the Salafi-Jihadi debates and that ideology – though claimed – is rarely the main driver for endorsing al-Shabaab. People often are taken by choices made through events or by tactics but in all cases they have gone too far to even think retreating. This is not uncommon in war situations and the fact that ideologies are religiously based does not affect much this dynamic.

Yet, there are differences and one should careful not to confuse for instance Hisbul Islaam militias and al-Shabaab militias just because their leaders have been put on the same terror list by the US government.

1.1. Coerced recruitments

Al-Shabaab has never been a strong military organisation (see Chapter IV for details), first of all because it has never been numerous enough to match its ambitions. Its strength has been the weakness of its opponents.

Forced recruitment has been practiced at different times by al-Shabaab commanders, either because they wanted to launch an offensive and needed canon fodder or because they lost too many fighters and needed to refurnish the front lines before getting better trained supporting troops. As far as possible, they intend to train the new recruits before they reach the frontline in order to avoid backlash or insubordination later on.

In all cases, forced conscription is not popular but at the same time it is not so unpopular. There is a tradition of forced recruitment in the Somali civil war (not to remind what happened under Mahamed Siyaad Barre): factions – especially in the first years - needed manpower and were not

shy to request elders to provide it. What makes the difference today is that Sheekhs more often than elders perform those calls no more during lineage meetings but in Quranic schools and other educational institutions. In both cases, the call is made for the youth since it is not mature enough to argue about the reasons for which suddenly they have to give up everything to fight a war that they often hardly understand the causes of.

Why this system keeps working is because of the relative success of the way al-Shabaab socializes its new fighters. Of course, the technique used is mobilizing religious discourses but, beyond rhetoric, the same technology is also enforced by many secular armed groups. This technique is fundamentally a careful management of a de-socialization/re-socialisation of the recruits.

Contrary to perceptions commonly shared in the West, most of the children in Islamist madrasas do not automatically become Islamists or Jihadists: in fact, it is often the very opposite, since (with a few exceptions) they are socialised in different circles and can assess on their own the value of what they are taught. However, al-Shabaab has a definite policy of engaging isolated children in Islamic schooling institutions, either orphans or those children who are far away from their family. As many other Islamic groups do, they provide moral support, welfare and show how they are good Muslims in all matters of life. According to some interviews, ideological teaching does not at first enter into this relationship: it is only taught once a closer relationship has developed.

Once gathered, those new recruits are mixed with others who have been enthusiastic to join and are cut from their normal environment. For weeks they are kept in a closed place where they got some military training (mostly physical exercises) and da'wa. The whole concept is to provide them with a new identity as al-Shabaab fighters whose aims is to defend Islaam, kill *murtadin* (apostates) and *kuffar* (infidels) and eventually get to Paradise if God's will.

This recruitment strategy is far from naïve: Al-Shabaab also creates further isolation when needed. For instance, in spring 2009, the media in Mogadishu were full of discussions on how *Shari'a* should be implemented, and sheekhs and 'ulemaa of all trends were on air: Al-Shabaab' stances were in an absolute minority and even mocked. Child-recruits were not allowed to stay in Mogadishu as they could have followed those discussions and agreed with more moderate views: they were allegedly brought to a camp near Balladogle airport (about 90km from Mogadishu), a place that FM transmissions from Mogadishu could not reach. Again, al-Shabaab trainers obtained the monopoly on the agenda for discussions and on their terms.

When they leave the training camp, they have to follow new rules in their social behaviours. The most important ones is that they have to look after their colleagues (spying would be a too strong word) and not interact as before with the lay population. For instance, they do not engage in talks with civilians expect for a definite purpose, they do not move alone and cannot use cell phones without the knowledge of their commanders. They are different and should behave differently than the average population.

1.2. Economic incentives
While its economic growth was impressive up to 2006 (especially in the period the ICU was ruling), after December 2006, Somalia entered into an economic downturn that has not yet stopped. Economic opportunities have disappeared and life got much tougher for the poorest section of the population.

Al-Shabaab, at the opposite of all factions including the TFG, has put in place a system of rules and regulations that provides the fighters with a salary that is not symbolical. Although figures varied in the interviews, this earning is between 60 USD and 200 USD for a fighter or low rank officer. The point is that this is paid not once a year but every month of the year.

Besides fighters, al-Shabaab also employs other people to undertake clerical duties or to perform specific tasks. For instance, killing elders, business people or spying the teacher of a Quranic school could be performed by teenagers who are not fully part of the organisation. While they perform Jihad, they also get money….

Even suicide bombers are rewarded economically. After they have prepared themselves, their family got money (a tentative figure is a couple of thousands USD) and after they have performed this act, al-Shabaab members visit again the family to give the condolences and provide another sum of money.

Had Somalia been at peace with itself for years, those economic incentives would not have worked as efficiently. But one should never forget that al-Shabaab developed in a society that has been brutalized for nearly two decades. Social prohibitions and life values are therefore low (though they still are there).

1.3. Born again Jihadists
Becoming very religious has been an efficient method to get rehabilitated in the Somali society. After episodes of havoc violence in the early 1990s, it was not rare to find former militias who enthusiastically endorsed the most radical understanding of religion.

As explained in chapter II, this was not uncommon. The growth of the Islamic Courts provided another motive for religious reassertion. But the key event (not to consider more global ones) was the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006 that was perceived inside and outside Somalia as driven by Washington (whatever the truth is). The Djibouti process, because it was clearly limited to those Islamists accepted by the US, did not stop the conspiracy theory, though its supporters outside the country were less numerous.

Among those who "converted" to al-Shabaab (a sociologist may argue that this is the right verb), one should underline those who were condemned and spent time in jail. Today, a number of studies are available to the role prisons play in the radicalisation process of young Muslims and this happens also for Somalis inside and outside the country. One should add that this is not completely new. A well-known example of this phenomenon in the past is Mahamed Abshir Muuse, a very mundane Police General when he was imprisoned by Mahamed Siyaad Barre after October 1969 and a dedicated Wahhabi when he went out to the extent that, as a SSDF leader, he gave the control of Boosaaso Port to al-Itihaad in 1992.

1.4. Recruitment of diaspora and East African radicalized Muslims.
When the international press mentions the foreign fighters in Somalia, one should be aware that the term brings as much information as confusion. Many of those foreign fighters may not have clear affiliation and went to Somalia because they wanted to "fight for Islam" and got the opportunity to reach the frontline. Besides their choice, what is the most concerning is less their personal trajectory than the fact they were assisted by a network of dedicated people to

send them in Somalia. Others, a minority, are associated with Somali groups or have links with al-Qâ'idah[46].

However, most of the foreign fighters are Somalis who own a foreign passport. This dynamic is also valid for the other side of the war since the Transitional Federal Institutions are filled with diaspora people. This process started in 1998, increased due to the 'Arta conference but got acceleration in spring 2006. Never ever was the diaspora so deeply involved in supporting a war in Mogadishu as in February-June 2006 and latter December 2006-December 2009. It never stopped, despite a growing division outside the country reflecting the bitter infighting among the Islamists inside.

A second part of the foreign fighters are Somali Abo (or Oromo Arusi). They came in different waves, some with their families got asylum in Somalia either in the early 1980s or after Meles Zenawi took over in Ethiopia; others were mere economic migrants; a few came after Huseen 'Aydiid provided the Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) with a sanctuary in order to increase the support provided by Eritrea in his war against the Rahanweyn Resistance Army backed by Ethiopia. They indeed are Ethiopians but should be considered parts and parcels of the Somali society. As a minority disconsidered by all, they had an opportunity to challenge their situation by joining al-Shabaab and did not miss it. One should wonder which proportion of their community is actually involved and to what extent they share the claimed ideology.

A third part is made up of the "true" foreign fighters. In December 2006 and January 2007, when the Ethiopian army invaded Somalia (and US Special Forces helped them) many of those who were killed or arrested were Arabs, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. Later in 2007 and 2008, Somalis mentioned the presence of "white" foreign fighters. Yet, in 2010, the trend seems to change in the sense that East Africans (Swahili speakers) seem to get more present on the front line. This description is based on impressionistic data and should be cross-checked. Yet, one can find a rationale for that change.

First, although several publications quote a number of Arabs (actually Saudis) as the "genuine" leaders of al-Shabaab, the al-Qâ'idah operatives involved in the 1998 and 2002 bombings have been working closely with al-Shabaab. Those people (the Comorian Fazul Mohamed being the last alive after the killing of Saleh Nabhan), have been working in the Eastern Africa coastal region for nearly two decades and it is far from surprising that they have had some success in recruiting people to get trained in Somalia.

Another way to assess this trend is to look at the migrations. Many Gibil 'Ad ("white skin") Somalis have family connections with Yemen or Gulf States, because they came from that region decades ago. It is therefore not unlikely that among the "white foreign fighters" who have been seen in Somalia, some are linked to that history. Moreover, at the beginning of the civil war, many Somalis escaped and found refuge in camps on the East African coast. Connections with local Muslim communities could have started and developed from then on (they actually were often older) and the radicalisation seen in Somalia mirrored also in Kenya.

This ideological hardening was also a consequence of the counter-terrorist policy enforced a harsh way by the Kenyan government after December 2006. There is no need here to describe a

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[46] The authors would be interested to know more about the links between those operatives and Ussama ben Laden because it seems obvious for them that only very few actually have that connection.

process witnessed elsewhere when intimidation, blackmailing and threats are directed to one community despite the fact that only a few dozens or hundreds individuals are concerned.

One should also keep in mind that the real front of al-Qâ'idah today is not in Somalia, but in Yemen and, though it is only an educated guess, one may believe that many "white" foreign fighters at one point preferred to leave Somalia and go to Yemen where all people speak Arabic and are Arabs (not black Africans) and where the stakes are much higher in terms of future for the Arabian Peninsula or Global Jihad.

Other reasons are at play that may be similar to what we witness in the Western world. For instance, over the last two decades conversions to Islam increased in the Kenyan highlands and newly converted people may provide a fertile ground for those who proselytise radical Islam at a time of great economic and political frustration. But, such a hypothesis deserves an analysis that is beyond the scope of this study.

1.5. Challenging the generational privileges
Al-Shabaab's generational challenge has to be taken seriously. It has different faces: at one level, it fundamentally challenges the lay political leaders and clan elders who have dominated the political realm for more than a generation; at another level, it provides an alternative sense of belonging and a possible "global model" that promises access to a wider world than the parochial universe of daily experience.

Somalia has been at war with itself for more than twenty years: those who have been at the forefront in the early days of the conflict have now aged and often enjoy a foreign passport. They also have failed to solve the crisis. Elders, who are respected by the international community and indeed still legitimate for a majority of the population, are also seen as having failed through their inability to propose a brighter future for the young generation.

The victory of the Islamic Courts in June 2006 in Mogadishu meant the collapse of a factional system framed by years of civil war. It may be difficult for outsiders to appreciate the rage and bitterness of an entire population toward leaders it had followed for years and who were never able to bring improvement. To this political bitterness, we should add the economic frustration of young adults graduated from the many "Universities" in Mogadishu who are unable to find a skilled job. Although remittances and the safety net represented by the clan were able to help to some degree, most of those born in the late 1980s and early 1990s cope with a bleak future.

Somali youth face a crisis of belonging: they have been raised to honour their clans, but those same clans seem to have destroyed the hope of a better future. They want to belong, but what they belong to? This question is especially raised among the diaspora youth and has no easy answer.[47] Clan is still paramount for the largest part of the Somalis; yet it appears also to be an explanation for the continuing stalemate and an excuse for procrastination.

Al-Shabaab offers several alternatives for these issues and also empowers its conscripts as soon as they endorse its ideology: its religious ideology edges out historical debates about *fiqh*

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[47] Andrea Elliot, "A call to Jihad from Somalia, answered in America", *New York Times*, 12 July 2009. Jerome P. Bjelopera and Mark A. Randol, *American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat*, Washington, Congressional Research Service, 20 September 2010.

and *shari'a*, allowing youth to believe that their interpretation of Islam is correct and that they can therefore confront whoever is not behaving "properly" in the public space – including elder and *wadaad* (religious men). The version of Islam professed by al-Shabaab also offers another advantage to the youth. It constitutes another pathway to globalisation and a way to practice their faith in any context: as Olivier Roy explained, the Salafi approach allows the believer to cut him/herself off from his/her local context and seek out a less parochial environment[48].

Somali youth also have been very sensitive to a number of crises (the *Intifada* in Palestine, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coercive migrant policies in the West) that have affected their imaginations and their expectations. Many have been offended by their perception that at the same time teenagers were fighting in Muslim countries against "invaders", they were increasingly denied the possibility to find asylum abroad. A more rational attitude would involve the realisation that the latter scenario was unlikely for most, but the humiliation reported by friends or relatives in the West hardened the view of many and provided an easier ground for radicalisation.

2. Shorts notes on the media policy of al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab has an astonishingly sophisticated media policy, compared both with that of other armed groups and its own prohibitions. As explained earlier, the age of the recruits and their often rural origin means that the media can have a powerful influence on their opinions. Often and rightly, observers point to al-Shabaab's use of the internet; furthermore, they also disseminate widely and retain for their membership a broad set of videos, pictures and da'wa speeches. It is paradoxical that a group which so strictly prohibits movies relies so heavily on its own videos to gain potential recruits.

From the outset, we must keep in mind that the internet content Al-Shabaab offers Somali audiences may not often be factual. Therefore, basing an analysis on website videos and clips may be dubious. Moreover, it would focus quite unilaterally on what al-Shabaab wants people to listen, not much on what actually they do. Moreover, even videos related to genuine facts are often not referring to the truth, especially when suicide bombers are the issue.

Al-Shabaab's internet strategy has three aims. First it is born of the distrust al-Shabaab shows for other media. Contrary to what is often assumed in the West, al-Shabaab had no trust in journalism, even al-Jazirah style (maybe because this channel favoured other groups within the ICU) and strongly reacted against some Arab media that were misinterpreting their actions. Second, it proves that al-Shabaab is a very modern movement since it is the only faction able to maintain websites (although the US often closes down its servers) and produce video clips in such a professional manner[49]. Third, it also allows the group to communicate directly with the Somali Diaspora wherever it is settled and the global Jihadi movement[50].

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[48] Olivier Roy, "The modernity of an archaic way of thinking" in *Globalized Islam: the Search for the New Ummah*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004.

[49] Other groups, including Sheekh Shariif's, try to do so but there is little doubt that al-Shabaab is more efficient.

[50] One could see sometimes a "copy and paste" attitude. After the Taliban killed aid workers accused to Christianize Afghans, al-Shabaab realized that the NGO World Vision that had been for more nearly 20 years in Gedo was indeed a Christian organisation…

As a way to attest its growing strength, al-Shabaab websites have also evolved. At the beginning (with www.heegan.net in 2007[51]), the websites offered little: images of "shahiid", biographies of leaders killed in the Jihad and news update on al-Shabaab operations. The only language used was Somali. Videos were limited in numbers and marked by an anti-Ethiopian fury.

The improvement (technical of course) came with the second generation of websites (www.almujaahid.com and www.kataaib.net or www.kataaib.info and www.kataib.org) : there were more videos and the websites looked more professional. Among the materials posted, there were more references to al-Qâ'idah and its leaders.

The maturity age (if one can say) came with those websites quoted in Chapter I: Arabic and English are used and the quality of the videos has improved dramatically. This could be linked to the association with a virtual organisation called the Global Islamic Media. The videos presented by http://amiirnuur.com, http://SomaliMidnimo.com, http://Somaliunited.com and also http://somalimemo.net/ reassert the difference between al-Shabaab's websites and the other Somali websites.

The former use fresh information on events in the areas they control or on the frontline with frequent updates. The videos are shot in a way to prove that they tell the truth in terms of location and timing. Even, when they lose a position, they talk about it and provide some rational explanations. Besides, there are many speeches related to *da'wa* and *muhadara* that comment on the news. Those points (the French would say "éléments de langage") are repeated by other Shabaab Sheekhs in their own mosque or places.

Because of the videos and the consistency of their discourses, lay people may actually believe what they are saying. They also play another card that is interesting: they give the people who watch their videos the impression that there are no filters and that compared to the usual websites, journalists do not cook their own news. Needless to say that al-Shabaab's webmasters got their degree in IT. So the people easily trust what they are saying.

Furthermore, the movies al-Shabaab shoots are interesting in many ways, not the least of which is their often very varied tones. Some, as for Iraq and Afghanistan, pretend to show a military ambush or a victorious battle against the "*Kuffar* and Crusaders". Others are more peaceful and use the same techniques as the usual Islamic movie production to visualize the paradise, the movement's numerous shahiid, their forty *hural'ayn* and the like. What is interesting is how they translate very traditional narratives into a strikingly radical discourse that allows the use of a legitimate traditional repertoire and jihadi discourse.

A semiological analysis would certainly stress the ability of these materials to incite viewers' emotions. Al-Shabaab's movies go beyond the "romanticism of the AK-47" that so captivated Western teenagers in the 1960s, given that they transform an initial sense of humiliation through faith into a military ability to react and the reassertion of the individual subject. The language (Somali, Arabic and even occasionally English) is also worthy of attention.

3. Recruitment among political "minorities"

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[51] In 2011, the website just lists how to get access to young ladies from different countries…

In a country and a conflict in which clan appeal has played such an important role, it is difficult to avoid reading al-Shabaab through a clan lens. This raises a few intriguing questions. Al-Shabaab rank and file is more representative in clan terms of the Somali population at large than other armed opposition groups which got a clear delimited clan constituency. For instance, Hisbul-Islam was made up of four groups which (with some exceptions) largely recruited in specific clans and sub-clans. Al-Shabaab can claim to have a broader recruitment market: Somalilanders(mostly Haber Ja'alo, Arab and Sa'ad Muuse sub-clans from Isaaq) and Puntlanders also belong to the movement and, in south-central Somalia, no clan has a clear ascendancy.

However, Somalis and observers alike are surprised by the fact that certain clans or sections of clans seem much more represented than others. For instance, Jareer/Bantus and Rahanweyn (who account also for a fairly significant section of the population) are well represented in the group's membership[52], and specific lineages of formerly powerful clans seem keener to join al-Shabaab than others: Murosade/Sabti/Israafiil (the sub-clan that the current al-Shabaab spokesperson belongs to), Haber Gidir/'Ayr/Kulmiye Absiye (the sub-clan that the late Aadan Haashi 'Ayrow belonged to), Haber Ja'alo, and Duduble.

The usual Somali explanation is that Al-Shabaab is recruiting among minorities. It is interesting that while elsewhere in the Islamist rhetoric, the term *mustasaf* (under privileged) is used to legitimize a recruitment strategy, in Somalia people got the term "minority" whose use is problematic and basically refers at a organisation of the society through clans lens, a vision that is drastically contested by the Salafis and al-Shabaab in particular.

While one may doubt that this is simply true, al-Shabaab has a definite policy of recruitment that emphasizes the specific status of certain clans. One may also argue that this is an outcome of their strategy to penetrate new populations by creating confusions and problems so that when they take over, everyone enjoys security[53].

It is true that Bantus never were accepted as potential political players in Somalia despite their huge number and were relegated, at best, to the position of followers rather than leaders[54]. It would not therefore be surprising that they would join an organization that gives them some recognition. At the same time, Jareer have their own internal competitions and they do not always share the same definition of their community: there are little commonalities between the Makane who are settled near the Shabeelle in Hiiraan and the Jareer of Lower Shabeelle, for instance.

The "minority" argument is less convincing when the Rahanweyn are concerned: the Transitional Federal Government of 2004 offered more opportunities to this clan's elites than anytime before. These elites are also well-connected with other components of the opposition, so to view them as a minority is debatable. A simple explanation for the level of Rahanweyn recruitment

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[52] The place and role of the Rahanweyn in the TFG, by comparison, would be very interesting to analyse since the TFG offered (by necessity) many positions in the army and Security sectors.

[53] Their tactic is often to provoke inter clan killings (by targeting figures of competing clans to raise the animosity) and make sure that among the victims are the respected elders or intellectuals who are vocal against al-Shabaab.

[54] Even under Siyaad Barre, they were also disqualified; the first time a Jareer was promoted General was in 2007;

could be that a member of this clan was al-Shabaab's spokesman, Mukhtaar Roobow[55], for two years, and this convinced his kinsmen to join his movement in large numbers; he also behaved in a way that showed his respect for his clan on numerous occasions, even at the risk of creating a row within the organisation.[56]

The presence of charismatic leaders of certain sub-clans in al-Shabaab leadership may therefore explain the relative overrepresentation of specific sub-clans in the organization. Although each of these belongs to a powerful clan and cannot in that sense be regarded as minority, each of them has been either cornered or edged out by intra-clan politics for a significant period under the warlords.

For instance, the overrepresentation of Murusade and Duduble is interesting. One should notice that in the 1990s both clans were junior players in Galgaduud because of the Haber Gidir/'Ayr whose number and military hardware made them the "natural" Hawiye leaders. Both clans developed therefore a will to revenge. In the 1990s, the relations between Murusade and Duduble were not good at all until Ahmed Nuur 'Ali Jimaale (Duduble), al-Barakat's CEO, took the initiative to invest in the region (he himself built two boreholes to cool down a bloody conflict between the two clans) and used his fame to bring (Salafi) Islamic charities to work in that region.

After June 2006, al-Shabaab developed a policy of influence in that part of Galgaduud for basically three reasons. First 'Eel Buur was not located near the main road and an Ethiopian offensive could be seen in advance; it was also far from the coast where Western war ships were patrolling. Second, al-Shabaab troops (then parts of the ICU) were welcomed by the Murusade sub-clan called Israafiil because they had Israafiil commanders (Abuu Qutayba, Sheekh 'Ali Dheere and Timo Jili')[57] among their leaders. Moreover, the Israafiil had no member in position of potential leaders associated with other dominant factions: the secular faction leader (and close ally of Ethiopia), Mahamed Qanyere, and the ICU leader, 'Abdirahmaan Mahamuud Faarah Janaqoow, were respectively Murusade/Fool'ulus/Haber Mahamed and Murusade/Fool'ulus/Haber 'Eeno. Furthermore, the Israafiil were historically the sub-clan that provided the Sheekhs and *wadaads* (religious figures) to the Murusade[58]. Before the civil war, they entertained a tradition of Sufism. But, the presence (and the achievements) of the Salafi charities in the 1990s transformed this pattern. Beyond the Israafiil, most Murusade/Sabti were opposed to their alleged clan leader, Mahamed Qanyere, and thought that a radical change would guarantee them a better and safer life.

The case of the Duduble is also interesting. Duduble militias were in their great majority recruited by the al-Barakat holding company in 1996 to secure its assets, particularly its money transfer and telecom businesses. Since the top management team[59] belonged to al-Itihaad, it

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[55] His sub-clan, Leysan, can hardly be considered a minority in Rahanweyn clan politics since a good part of the clan is urbanized in Baydhabo, has an economic and political elite and, thanks to the TFG and al-Shabaab, a military elite today (which was never the case before).

[56] For instance, he allowed 8 TFG MPs to leave Baydhabo alive when he took the city in January 2009, even though they were considered *kuffar* by his organisation.

[57] As alluded to in the previous chapters, one was the head of Mogadishu Security throughout ICU and a founding member of al-Shabaab; the second was a trader in Bakaraaha market in Mogadishu and left al-Itihaad to join al-Shabaab early 2006; the third one is a leading technician for heavy weaponry.

[58] In most Somali clans, it happens that a specific sub-clan is specialized in religious activities.

[59] They nevertheless were active in the muqawama. A deputy of Ahmed Nuur Jimaale and influential commander of Muqawama, 'Abdullaahi Aspro (also put on the US terror list), was killed in August 2007 in

was edged out after November 2001 when the US government decided to freeze al-Barakat's assets. This event radicalised several militias' commanders, who subsequently joined al-Shabaab.

Involvement in al-Shabaab may therefore be linked to two factors, namely the inability to gain influence in intra-clan matters and the existence of charismatic leaders who, willingly or not, promote the movement among their lineage or sub-clan.

Al-Shabaab leaders are not naïve and know how clan appeal can play out in their society. They try their best to use it without being in thrall to it. To a great extent, this replicates the tactics used to spread Islam (or varieties of Islam) in a clan society. When they attempt to take control of new territory, they put members of local clans in the forefront without involving them in coercive operations against the locals.

For instance, in 'Eel Dheere, an al-Shabaab contingent became the guests of a sub-clan of the Ma'allin Diblawe (which is a sub-sub clan of Abgaal) because some of its members were from that extended lineage. Then, al-Shabaab tried to take over the administration of the town and created tensions with other lineages and sub-sub-clans. When elders argued against harassing *qaat* traders and the like, they were beaten. But expelling al-Shabaab by force would have divided the local community. The only solution was to bring people from Mogadishu who belonged to the same lineage that was protecting al-Shabaab in order to reverse the decision to provide hospitality, and ask them to leave, which they had to do under the threat of force. The same thing happened in Gure'eel and Dhuusa Marreeb where al-Shabaab fighters were guests of the Kulmiye Absiye, the Aadan 'Ayrow's 'Ayr sub-clan.

Another more sinister implication is that when al-Shabaab is established somewhere and faces opposition from the local community, those who act to get rid of the opponents are not known locally thus preventing clan becoming an issue and threatening al-Shabaab's stay. The use of strangers is not simply an imitation of a global tactic by the Muja'ed (fighter); it also prevents the association of al-Shabaab members or sympathizers - who may have to act within the local community - with abhorrent deeds.

Al-Shabaab needs indeed to challenge social structures that close any opportunity for its development and prove that it was offering a genuinely revolutionary option to the youth, as the Somali Youth League did in the 1940s. That is why when fully in control of an area, al-Shabaab tried to humiliate the powerful local clans in order to prove that clanism should be eradicated. It also happened in Merka in a very obvious way since al-Shabaab searched the houses of the locally most powerful clan figures to show that its domination was over.

There are other aspects that would deserve detailed analysis. For instance, in Merka, after taking over the city, al-Shabaab commanders appointed in various positions of the administrations Reer Mayo, Jareer/Bantu and Gibil 'Ad (maybe because they have Arab origin?) ostentatiously not to give any positions to Dir/Biimaal and Hawiye/Haber Gidir, the two clans that have been competing over the last two decades for the leadership of the city[60]. This has gone even further, since al-Shabaab members got married with daughters of those "minority

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Galgaduud by the Ethiopian Army. He was very vocal against al-Shabaab. He was second deputy of the ICU Shura and a deputy of ARS chairman, Hasan Daahir Aweys.

[60] The funny conclusion of the story is that after having collected taxes for the drought, they just shared the money within their own kinsmen at the furore of al-Shabaab commander who transferred them and had to put in charge better trained members…

clans". The practice has not been uncommon in the 1990s since the wife's family can expect a greater social respect and money (Shabaab fighters are paid). In the 1990s, the *mahr* (dowry) had been paid by the new son-in-law by protecting the family-in-law business. With al-Shabaab, the dowry is paid by teaching Quran. Last but not least, by doing so, al-Shabaab got access to the family in law and could recruit new people from those minority clans.

Denouncing clanism in Somalia is easier said than done and Somalis are not the last to describe al-Shabaab internal debates or public arguments through clan lens. To deny this vision, the Jihadi movement has not many possibilities. In contrast to other groups, the movement is led by a Shura rather than just one leader (see chapter I), therfore reducing the influence of clanism. It is interesting that while the ICU had to compromise on clan issues even at the leadership level, al-Shabaab leaders were extremely blunt in their staunch opposition to it. After the Kismaayo take-over on 22 August 2008, they appointed a governor who was a strong advocate of global Jihad and belonged to the Isaaq clan that has no presence there. It was felt that he could rule a multi-clan area where his own clan has no stake. The same happened in Merka where al-Shabaab appointed a member of the Majeerteen clan as the local leader, and in Bay where Jareer got key positions. Yet, of course, clan may eventually influence al-Shabaab internal interactions while not being used as an explicit element in arguing for or against a decision.

Even if one accept this loose use of the term "minority", one should wonder why al-Shabaab is unable to spell out a political project that would repair those humiliations and rectify the society to make the minorities the equal of the others. This agenda does not yet exist. Al-Shabaab seems interested of recruiting them because these latter may feel the outrage of living this way and cultivate a sense of revenge. Again, while by many such choices, al-Shabaab could build a political project for Somalia (whatever we think about this project), the very military nature of the organisation seems to reduce it to a marginal aspect.

4. Conclusion

The first point to be highlighted is that al-Shabaab has framed a recruitment policy. It does so by identifying people inclined to be religious (often sympathisers of other Islamist groups such as al-Itihaad and al-I'tisaam), isolated youth and people from "minority clans" who are somewhat interesting in revenge.

The strength of the system is at different levels. First, recruitments are often voluntary in the sense that coercion is not enforced openly: at the contrary, what is often showed is an alternative way of life that makes the recruit share better his religion with new friends. The process of de-socialisation and re-socialisation is both very simple and very complex since it intends to cut the emotional links with the former environment of the recruit (friends and relatives alike) and provides a new one.

One should analyse the messages witnessed on al-Shabaab websites carefully and without ideological motivations. Those messages do not radicalize people by themselves, they need other elements that are provided by al-Shabaab propaganda in Somalia or by recruiting networks overseas. Among those elements, one should not forget that many State policies in the West are also much more radicalized than any time before. There is no need here to remind statements made by European leaders on Islam or the debatable initiatives in the US to bear this remark in mind.

While a political analysis can show that al-Shabaab benefited from the counter-terrorist policies of the US and Ethiopia, a sociological one underlines how its strength grew due to several social and cultural dynamics among Somalis in country and abroad. There is a deep distrust toward the conventional political arena and a real bitterness towards the clan system because both have failed to provide a future for the generation born at the beginning of the civil war. Al-Shabaab offers different ways to empower youth: clan hierarchies do not play a major role; the ideology effaces the subtleties of Islam and sums it up as a set of short rules and regulations; and the group a link to the "far-away" beyond its often-quoted references to the "lion of Islam", Usama bin Laden.

Certainly, policy makers focus on the implications of al-Shabaab survival. In our views several should be discussed and are not currently, though al-Shabaab is no more a young organisation. The first one is the depth of its influence in Somalia, East Africa and the diaspora. Western countries over the last years have been often prisoners of their own mistakes and were not in a position to assess the negative impact of polices they recommended for Somalia and the region. The current military victories and unpopularity of this organisation may convince people that the nightmare Somalia has been in for 5 years would be over. Our analysis intends to show that this is not going to happen soon.

Al-Shabaab got roots in the Somali society and expresses (certainly in a perverse way) a number of blockages and stalemates both at the social and political levels that no one is interested to challenge at this stage. Al-Shabaab offers its solutions which are unacceptable to the greatest majority of the Somalis and the international community.

If al-Shabaab seems to have failed in southern Somalia (as flows of population out of the areas it controls illustrate), its failure in the diaspora is less evident because overseas the perception of what is happening in Somalia is in *trompe l'oeil* and reframed by the different ideological context diaspora people live in. Although the term radicalisation is now becoming fashionable, it has different meanings for different people and policy makers need to make their understanding clearer. Wahhabism is on the rise in the West, which will translate socially in much more conservative behaviours and therefore more tensions with secular Europeans and other Muslim schools of thought present in Western countries. Yet, one should not confuse this level (problematic for women rights for instance) with a political one where security concerns have to be addressed. But al-Shabaab plays in that ambiguity and may have more echo than thought.

Another aspect is the emergence of a Jihadi threat in the Horn of Africa, especially in East Africa (and maybe South Africa). This should not be a surprise since all policies followed after 2006 were based on an oxymoron: al-Shabaab is a global Jihadi organisation that can be defeated by a containment war in Somalia. Ten years after 9/11, African States and their allies may be smarter to respond to this kind of terrorist challenges. Our view is that this is not yet happening.

The current Western paradigm is to defeat al-Shabaab by destroying its leadership. Yet, those enforcing this policy should be able to measure whether killing old commanders actually weakens the organisation or simply brings fresh blood more extremist than the old guard. There is no easy answer to that question. That might provide a further justification to start a policy review.

CHAPTER IV
AL-SHABAAB MILITARY TACTICS

Analysed by these two authors (who, by the way, are civilians), the military tactics used by al-Shabaab seem less a transplant of doctrines experimented elsewhere than an adaptation of the local knowledge gained throughout the various war episodes under the factions from 1991 to 2006.

This is hardly surprising since many al-Shabaab fighters were already involved in combat before Al-Shabaab was even founded. Moreover, especially throughout the Ethiopian presence, Al-Shabaab requested former military officers to contribute to the training of its combatants: this was a way to both increase the quality of their foot soldiers and check the allegiance of those officers vis-à-vis the Ethiopian intervention.

Many former military officers were also coerced, some killed[61], in the early stage of al-Shabaab existence from 2003 onwards, though one may argue that those targeted killings were responding to others undertaken by pro-Ethiopian and US surrogate forces. It is doubtful that the perpetrators were only to belong or belonged to al-Shabaab and that those officers were only killed for not offering their military expertise. Yet, the end result was the same: avoiding that other factions got better trained at a time a new movement wanted to make a show of force.

However, there are many differences that may or may not be strategic, but these latter attest al-Shabaab's ability to draw (at least elementary) lessons from other conflicts worldwide, with a special focus on Afghanistan and Iraq without any surprise. This has been made possible thanks to foreign fighters with an experience of those wars but also the presence of those latter in all al-Shabaab contingents where they advise and fight alongside their fellow comrades. Among aspects that require an attention, five could be quoted here:

a- the use of IEDs and suicide bombers, which are basically new war technologies for Somalia, with the caveat of General Mahamed Faarah 'Aydiid's fight against UNOSOM II and US forces from June 1993 to October 1993;

b- a reshaping of the combat unit based on 9 elements, while the Somali army had developed 11 member units and Ethiopian army 6 member unit. This number has some religious connotations;

c- a clear focus on infantry at the difference of the usual factional tactics that were coupling the use of foot soldiers and *technicals* in all environments. This situation could be explained different ways, either in terms of low expertise of the fighters or difficulty to supply ammunitions for heavy weaponry;

d- a high mobility of troops that could be explained for political reasons (in order to avoid creating local warlordism as discussed elsewhere in this report) but also by a need to

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[61] Such as General Mahamed 'Abdi (Abgaal/Harti) was a prominent Qadiri sheekh and a vocal critic of the Salafi movements early 2006.

compensate the limited number of fighters vis-à-vis the huge territory and population they need to control.

e- at the opposite of the factions, the very distinctive deployment of troops by al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab troops are massed on the borders of the territory they control and very few are settled in main urban centres they have taken over. This plan of action reflects or dictates the politics of fear enforced upon urban civilians. This setting has never been used by al-Shabaab enemies to launch offensives despite the clear psychological effect, the control of a main city for a few hours could have.

This military paradigm is not static and one can imagine that innovations are discussed specially after significant defeats such as that had resulted from the Ramadan month's offensive or the massive loses after the last round of military operations led by the AMISOM and TFG's army (plus surrogate militias that may from time to time be more decisive that the trained TFG soldiers) late February and early March 2011. This section concludes with a tentative assessment of the consequences the current AMISOM/TFG offensives may have.

1. The modernization of war and the globalisation of suicide bombers

With the benefit of hindsight, the newest strictly military tactics of the war are two: the intensive use of improvised explosives devises (IEDs) in urban warfare; suicide bombers. To be rigorous, the IEDs are not completely new in the Somali civil war. Throughout the hunt against General Mahamed Faarah 'Aydiid in summer 1993, they were used in many occasions but not in the systemic manner of today. The number is indeed so large that the authors have renounced to even provide an educated guess.

A last more political aspect should be added. Al-Shabaab acknowledges its small numbers of fighters in front of its ambitions and intends to involve as many as possible in the war against the "Crusaders" (AMISOM) and the apostates (*murtadin*). The war is also seen as an opportunity for al-Shabaab to convince the population to confront those enemies. Therefore, as explained below, al-Shabaab does not initiate skirmishes everywhere on the frontline, it does only where and when civilians could be engaged. What is perceived by foreign observers as a tactic to get human shield is promoted by al-Shabaab as the way to convince Muslims of good faith that Jihad is the only path.

While the IEDs are responsible for killing and wounding many people (mostly civilians), there should be qualifications in the sense that every society does react a certain way when casualties are high. Without discussing here the case of AMISOM soldiers, one can be inclined to believe that the atomisation of the urban society is such in Mogadishu that the number of people injured does not directly impact with public opinion's demands for a tougher or a more compromising attitude towards or against the insurgency. Families are destroyed, relatives are in tears but the system is not put in danger by those casualties, as far as the TFG continues to keep AMISOM support.

The AMISOM does produce figures of killed and wounded people after incidents but increasingly they look politically motivated. As a policy, the AMISOM intends to downplay collateral damages (even when its own soldiers shoot randomly). Victims from al-Shabaab and from friendly fires are considered the same. AMISOM's behaviour not to acknowledge its own mistakes angers

recurrently the population and paradoxically does not create the expected outrage against al-Shabaab.

Concerning AMISOM's own casualties, it is difficult to figure out the extent of internal debate raised by the growing number of casualties, though one may guess that it is taking place among soldiers and officers on the ground. However, no significant political public discussions have yet started on the concept of operation both in Bujumbura and Kampala.

In 1993, the use of IEDs was made possible by training 'Aydiid's officers in military camps in Sudan. Although Ussama bin Laden was not sparing with his own alleged actions to defeat US forces in Mogadishu, the involvement of the Sudan military was a more discreet and effective.

The resurgence of this tactics is rooted in the globalisation of combat techniques used by the Iraqi *muqawama* (that included a great number of Iraqi military officers and special units of the Ba'ath Party) and the militants in Kashmir trained by Pakistani military officers. There is no doubt that this know-how was transmitted either by Somalis who had in the previous years fought in Afghanistan and other conflicts (Chechnya, Lebanon) or by foreign fighters who were trained by al-Qâ'idah.

Suicide bombing is of course a radically new choice that never was part of the Somali culture of war until 2006. This chart intends to provide an overall view of the 2006-2010 incidents.

Action	Location	Date	Target	Remarks
Car	Baydhabo Parliament	18/09/2006	TFG President	
Car	Baydhabo road control	19/10/2006	TFG/Ethiopian soldiers	
Car	Darmooley , near Bal'ad	27/3/2007	Ethiopian military base	First Somali suicide bomber against Ethiopian military.
Car	HQs of the Prisons Administration ,	15/3/2007	Ethiopian military base	Suicide bombes used a oil tanker.
Car	House of General Gabre	20/4/2007	Ethiopian military commander	Suicide bomber failed to reach his target.
Car	UAE Sheikh Zayed farm in Afgooye.	24/4/2007	Ethiopian military base	
Car	TFG Prime Minister office in Karaan	03/06/2007	'Ali Mahamed Geedi	Al-Shabaab used Prime Minister guards.
Car	Afgooye bridge control	30/7/2007	Ethiopian military	
Car	Baydhabo Hassay Industry near Bar Bakin	10/10/2007	Ethiopian military base	
Three cars	Hargeysa (three locations)	29/10/2008	Somali land authority, UNDP, Ethiopian	The action was coordinated. Foreigners involved.

			business attaché	
Car	Boosaaso , PIS office	29/10/2008	Puntland Intelligence and CIA	
Car	Maka al-Mukarama street	24/01/2009	AMISOM military base Hodan district (Labour House)	Many civilians killed by Al-Shabaab or AMISOM. Foreigner involved
	Somali national University	22/2/2009	AMISOM/Burundi military base	
Car	Hamar Jajab, ex oil deposit.	24/5/2009	TFG military base for training	Foreigners involved.
Car	Beled Weyne	18/6/2009	Minister of security, 'Umar Haashi Aadan and former Ambassador to Ethiopia Laqanyo.	More than one hundred civilians killed including traditional elders, such as the Ugaas of Jejeele.
Cars with , UN emblem	Wadajir district (Halane military school)	17/9/2009	AMISOM HQs	Many AMISOM soldiers killed or wounded including the Burundian deputy and a Somali general
Person ,	Wadajir at Hotel Shamow	3/12/2009	4 TFG ministers, intellectuals and university students	Suicide bomber, from Denmark; 4 ministers died and more than 20 students and journalists
Person	Waberi district at 21 October base	4/01/2010	TFG military base	This mission failed and only the suicide bomber died
Minim bus and car	Hodan district, Maka al-Mukarama street	15/02/2010	Minister of defence, Indha'adde	Though TFG president was accused, al-Shabaab websites claimed the bombing
Truck Car	Commercial Bank in Shangani	27/04/2010	AMISOM military base	
Three persons	Hamar Weyne , Hotel Muna	24/8/2010	TFG MPs,	One of the three was from Sweden , another a staff of Roobow
Two Car	Mogadishu airport	9/9/2010	TFG/AMISOM leadership meeting	
Person.	Villa Somalia presidential house	21/9/2010	TFG/AMISOM	Suicide bomber previously body guard of

				the Minister of Interior, 'Abdulqaadir 'Ali 'Umar

This list allows drawing a few conclusions. First and foremost, one can see that suicide bombings grew throughout the Ethiopian troops were in Somalia. The joint actions in Somaliland and Puntland would deserve a deep analysis but the information released to the public has been minimal. This is an extra-ordinary event especially when we compare it to the last episode of fighting early March 2011 when two suicide bombers behaved in such a hectic manner that they were identified long before they reached their target. Again, no clear conclusion can be drawn from that series. If al-Shabaab is managed by al-Qâ'idah as it is often said by US experts, then one should wonder why no other bombing incident has reached that level of sophistication?

Never before Ethiopian intervention was the radicalisation so high and were people so numerous to be ready to lose their life to fight those they considered occupying forces. This again shows that al-Shabaab despite its repeated claims on Jihad had more success and followers as an ultra-nationalistic organization. After Ethiopian soldiers left Somalia, the suicide bombings did not stop. While the targets are understandable, there is one aspect that could be underlined. All major bombings took place after al-Shabaab influential commanders were either killed or defeated in a humiliating manner…

A major concern is also the role played by the diaspora as a strategic supplier of suicide bombers[62]. One can see an alarming pattern for countries that host huge Somali communities, although the number of people joining al-Shabaab (and suicide bombers) is in proportion very low. This indeed raises questions on the sophistication of the recruiting networks, their possible ability to reach out other Muslim communities or indigenous people who got converted.

Of course, not only suicide bombers are recruited in the diaspora but also many Al-Shabaab commanders who travel to Somalia for few months and then go back to their family, also collect money and convince others to join the fray. It is not so extraordinary. For instance, many Darfuri students at Khartoum universities had their period in the field and went back to their study after several months of absence from the University. What makes the situation both comical and concerning is that people claiming in Somalia to be committed to Jihad just take a break from time to time to visit their relatives and collect their welfare allowances.

Another aspect deserves attention. Despite all claims on madrassas that brain wash children, the number of local suicide bombers is minimal. Moreover, they seem to obey one pattern: to have been in the inner circle of leaders. Mukhtaar Roobow Abu Mansuur is a good example of this situation since at a minimum twice some of his bodyguards committed suicide. That should, if not alter, at least question the image of moderation he enjoys easily among foreign diplomats. The last September attempt killing of the TFG President offers also some food for thought. The suicide bombers was part of 'Adbulqaadir 'Ali 'Umar's militias and defected after an argument. Joining Al-Shabaab for him was not a Copernician revolution. Again, the borders, foreign observers draw too easily do not always make sense for Somalis.

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[62] A recent case being Bashir Qassem (from Bagadi clan) who spent a long time in Kuwait and came back to become suicide bomber (against the TFG police station) late February 2010. His father was a well-known and respected police officer. His personal history was discussed by many Somalis since he seems to be typical of recruits for suicide bombing who are known to be psychologically fragile.

Al-Shabaab's aim is also to get the population involved in the fight. This can be understood two ways. One is rooted in its ideology: Jihad for al-Shabaab ideologues is a personal decision but they expect events to prove those reluctant to follow them that they are wrong and should join the battle. The second one is the comparison its leaders can make between the popular sympathy and active support they enjoyed while Ethiopian forces were in Somalia, and the fear and escapism people show after January 2009 toward them. This golden age is bygone but al-Shabaab is not shy to educate people with its own methods.

2. Organizing the coexistence of foreign and local fighters

Al-Shabaab has reformed the military organisation in a way that is not decisive but yet may question some assumptions. First, the basic unit is made up of 9 fighters and its higher level is 40[63]. Second, the contingents are always mixed as foreign fighters have to be immersed among lay soldiers. Third, the location of the troops is based on possible threats and not on strict control of the population. Four, the relations with the population are regulated and al-Shabaab fighters kept most often isolated in order not to engage the locals and rebuild ties with civilians. Five, this relative isolation provides them with a greater capability to move from one area to another. Those points are developed hereafter.

Ethiopian patrols in Mogadishu use to move by unit of 6 armed with one rocket propelled grenade (RPG) or one bazooka and one machine gun (like PKM). In the Somali army, the basic unit was made up of 11 soldiers: one specialist in radio, one nurse and 9 combatants. Strangely enough, al-Shabaab kept the core combatant unit at 9 fighters equipped either with the same or with 2 bazookas and 1 PKM. The number 9 is also a religious reference: Tabligh people proselytise by groups of nine.

The commanders of the 40 unit deserve some comments. At the difference of the chiefs of basic units or most foreigners, they show their face and are known even to the civilians. This is both an insurance (if they defect, they can be located and eliminated) and a need since they have to talk in the mosques, make *da'wa* and be involved in increasing civilian administrative duties.

This identification is important because it obliges al-Shabaab to deal with clan issues. Most often, the commander does not come from the area he is operating. His appointment takes the importance of the area and its statute in the war into consideration. For instance, if the area is at the border with a territory controlled by the enemy, then the commander belongs to the main clan, that owns that territory. If the commander operates in a safe area for al-Shabaab, he will be from a clan outside the zone, except if al-Shabaab has a specific agenda towards a local clan it want to win entirely in that area. If there are clan problems, the commander should be an outsider.

Moreover, a commander and his fighters do not stay too long in an area in order to avoid more intimate relations with the lay population and/or defections. This pattern shows how al-Shabaab could be both highly decentralized and still hierarchical in its functioning. When some commanders become too popular, they also could be removed and tasked with more bureaucratic

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[63] 40 is an important number. When 40 Muslim males stay in a place, they have to pray collectively on Friday. If they are only 39, everyone can do it his own way. The community of the believers starts at 40. This explains also why this size is said to correspond to one district. Whatever happens, they can pray together without civilians.

or secretive duties that keep them aloof of their fighters or the lay population. Observers should for instance analyse very carefully the way Mukhtaar Roobow won Bay and Bakool and mostly lost of his influence through a series of appointment made by Abuu Zubeyr after July 2009.

Al-Shabaab *technicals* are armed mostly with B-10 recoilless guns, 75 mm BK and 106 cannon. In particular the B-10 is often used against AMISOM tanks and armoured vehicles. When al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu, it does so using civilian shelters. Because the fighters know that AMISOM will shell the location they are in a matter of few dozens seconds, they do not use anymore cars that can be easily monitored but walk.

One should underline that al-Shabaab at the difference of the clan factions prefers to use more infantry than *technicals*. This might be linked to different considerations. First, ideologically, al-Shabaab is a very populist militaristic movement and the romantic cult of the AK 47 is closer to that mindset than the comments of David Galula's teaching. Second, their adversary (i.e. the AMISOM) is much better equipped to destroy *technicals*: a confrontation would be hopeless and very costly in terms of military hardware lost. Al-Shabaab has developed trenches (not only in Mogadishu as recently found by AMISOM) and also in the Central Region. It is repeating what happened in the first years of the civil war in Ballanballe, 'Aabudwaaq and Galka'ayo.

The last reason is the supply of ammunitions. At the opposite of many other experts (including the UN Monitoring Group that made itself known for this), the authors intend to believe that the supply of ammunitions to al-Shabaab is one enduring problem that has not been solved. Months ago, a number of TFG officers were arrested and accused to sell huge amounts of ammunitions (especially for heavy weapons) to al-Shabaab. This latter has not really recovered from the loss of this supplying source, though the organisation still seems to have the financial means to buy quantities of ammunitions.

Very often, in the past, al-Shabaab was provoking the fight but not reacting to it until TFG soldiers had sold a good share of their bullets on the market. This description was often heard in 2009 and 2010 and, if true, made the war a self sustained exercise paid for by the international community and Ethiopia.

It would be foolish not to believe that Al-Shabaab got weapons and ammunitions from outside. Yet, the quantities seem too little to fulfil the needs of that organisation. The authors never heard that ASWJ people were selling (Ethiopian) ammunitions to al-Shabaab, while the TFG was recurrently accused to do so. This may only prove once more that al-Shabaab first and foremost is strong because of the weaknesses of its adversaries[64].

While AMISOM officials mentioned the presence of 600 foreign fighters in Mogadishu early February at Wilton Park conference, it seems difficult for the authors to have a precise idea of their approximate number. First, as explained in the previous section, increasingly foreign fighters come from the region and it is not easy to differentiate between Somali Abo (Oromo

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[64] The decision taken by the TFG President to fire key military and intelligence officials early March 2011 is said to have been provoked by two overlapping reasons. The first one is that most of them were supporters of the Speaker and could claim their share in what appeared as a victory against Shabaab. The second is that some were allegedly suspected to cooperate with al-Shabaab either for clan reasons or money.

Arusi) and Somalis (without discussing the number of passports they hold), and between Zanzibari or Coastal Tanzanian and Kenyan people and Jareer (Somali Bantus).

Secondly, and this should be considered the main point, because the foreign fighters are merged with Somali fighters. The existence of a strict difference between foreign and local fighters would indeed create quickly deep tensions and suspicions between them, because of the allocation of resources (heavy weapons, ammunitions, medicines,…). In the same way, commanders of the 40 are all Somalis first and foremost for the ability to speak fluently the Somali language.

Yet, though the authors are not sure this is a systematic policy, commanders have often a foreigner as deputy but it is difficult to delimitate the competences between the two. Over time, especially throughout the offensive of May-July 2009 in Mogadishu there seems to have been arguments between them but with few exceptions, it is difficult to differentiate between the TFG/AMISOM propaganda and the reality on the ground[65].

Before the late February and early March 2011 offensive, the agency of al-Shabaab troops was very different from what one should have expected from Somali factions. In the 1990's, troops were located in the main urban centres because their control was always contested from within and the livelihood of militias was much easier in towns than in the countryside where looting could not be repeated indefinitely. In the case of al-Shabaab, controlling populations in cities they have taken over has been achieved often in a matter of a few weeks. There is no wish from al-Shabaab commanders to witness their foot soldiers sympathising with the lay population (at the difference of the usual Somali factions). When the population seems coerced enough to obey (see chapter V), al-Shabaab troops deploy often at the borders of the territory they control and only make a show of force for few hours or days in big cities that are located inside their territory.

This situation should be read in a radically different manner. It is a way to keep al-Shabaab fighters as dissocialized as possible and put them in the sole stance they have been trained for: defending Islam land against *murtadin* and crusaders…

3. Military misadventures

Throughout the last week of February and early March 2011, several important military operations took place in Mogadishu, Hiiraan, Lower Jubba, Galgaduud and Gedo against al-Shabaab: militias supported by Ethiopia, TFG army and the AMISOM acted for the first time - if not coordinated, at least simultaneously - on different fronts putting strain on al-Shabaab forces beyond expectations.

In Mogadishu, the main fighting took place at the ministry of Defence, near Bakaraaha market and in Dayniile. It was the first time Burundian troops reached those places that were important

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[65] One case is interesting in that it sheds light on inter-clan relations within al-Shabaab. In August 2007, a full colonel 'Ayr/Absiye was killed by al-Shabaab after his post was taken over. It appeared that he was helping that movement and supplying them (Ethiopian) ammunitions by mimicking fake attacks. But that time, a al-Shabaab fighter (from Ogaadeen clan) told him that whatever he was doing he was an apostate (*murtad*) and shot him dead. A few hours after, this al-Shabaab member was executed by some of his 'Ayr colleagues.

in the military logistics of the jihadists in Mogadishu. The battle was bloody and it seems likely that a few hundred al-Shabaab fighters died or were wounded ("up to 400", said AMISOM sources). This was enough to generate a fresh hope to defeat militarily al-Shabaab. Early March, the offensive was repeated with more success. Casualties seemed again very high on all sides though no figure was available at the time of writing.

Yet, this period of fighting highlights weaknesses of the AMISOM/TFG army. Victory seems possible in Mogadishu but a lasting challenge to al-Shabaab needs more efforts to be put on the political side and on the military guidance of TFG troops.

The AMISOM (actually Burundian troops) fought more than decently but got impressive loses. While the official figure of AMISOM soldiers killed in the fight was first estimated publicly to 6, diplomats and journalists went over 50. The number of wounded soldiers was such that there were no more free beds in Kenya to cure them and that some Burundians were sent to Djibouti with French and US support. The AMISOM media policy, by denying high losses, can be understood but its impact on Somali perceptions of the situation may become quickly counter-productive: if all major actors are playing propaganda, then nothing is true. Lies and conspiracy theories may sort out Al-Shabaab problems more than AMISOM's.

The main show of weakness from AMISOM side was not military, it was political. The TFG army was unable (or unwilling according to the versions) to keep the positions won over al-Shabaab. The end result was that the population that sided with the TFG and AMISOM had to find refuge to safer TFG areas. The trust AMISOM and TFG army should have built among the civilians just evaporated as fast as the TFG soldiers. Early March, a new attempt was more successful but the TFG army had yet to prove its credibility in front of the population in not looting properties, in protecting civilians and in keeping positions despite a likely al-Shabaab counter-attack.

This is a recurrent problem that has not yet been decisively addressed by the international community. This lack of intermediary level in the TFG army is not solved by the TFG leadership since this latter prefers the AMISOM to do the job and not create an instrument that may make them increasingly irrelevant. Moreover, after 20 years of crisis, many have not forgotten the potential for a strong military man to orchestrate a palace coup. A way to contrast this scenario has been to appoint very generously senior officers despite notional military expertise and to call respect for the 4.5 formula at a time most of the foot soldiers belong to Rahanweyn and Abgaal clans (with a slight percentage of Haber Gidir Saleebaan).

The AMISOM is expecting 4000 fresh troops in the next months. With them, it may pretend to take over the whole capital city by the end of the transition on 21 August 2011 since it is going to have the man power and the military hardware to do so. Yet again, concerns should be raised on two aspects.

On the one side, if there is no TFG back up in this process, Mogadishu would appear controlled by foreign forces, which sooner or later would push sections of the population to endorse al-Shabaab. This risk exists and the current cabinet has not proven different from the previous ones in its capacities to pledge and not deliver on this very dimension.

On the other, people should remember that between January 2007 and December 2008, the Ethiopian army – well trained and well equipped – also occupied the Somali capital city but had eventually to leave. Because of the lack of any decent political strategy (since all efforts are put on a non-delivering TFG), AMISOM may win all battles and lose the war…

Yet, al-Shabaab was beaten in a way that provoked a near panic of their commanders, to the extent that they went in all neighbourhoods they controlled in Mogadishu requesting civilians to join them and fight to death. Reinforcement was also sent from Lower Jubba and Middle Shabeelle, including a fair number of foreign fighters. This explains the violence of the fighting early March. Al-Shabaab was not taken aback by the new AMISOM/TFG offensive and fought accordingly.

This situation showed that the vociferous statements on Jihad and the often announced collapse of the TFG and AMISOM have yet to meet the reality. Key commanders decided to go to Merka or Baydhabo to promote the ultimate fight against the "Crusaders" and show bodies of Burundian soldiers to convince the population that al-Shabaab delivers what it has been promising for so long. They were not on the forefront to oppose the AMISOM and TFG offensive early March.

This behaviour could hardly be seen as a sign of strength by the Somali public. Actually, many were ashamed by the way Burundian corpses were mistreated by al-Shabaab. Moreover, uneasy questions were raised on the way many al-Shabaab fighters and commanders just run away to escape death: what Jihad is it if those claiming to be ready for martyrdom just run away? Let us not be naïve on the theological debate but the "deconsecration" of al-Shabaab as a Jihadi organisation went deeper after these fighting episodes and increasingly make people consider al-Shabaab as one another armed group in the Somali civil war. Also people notice that the children of the most important commanders are not waging Jihad, as the warlords' offspring was often out of the country.

Another aspect has to be taken care of: the defectors. This phenomenon actually started during the first significant offensive against the TFG in May 2009. The battle was tough and many foot soldiers or even al-Shabaab commanders (mostly Hawiye) defected from then on: their number is not accessible for the public (and the authors) but a rough estimate may be less than 150 by March 2011. No major commanders defected and one should be careful about data collected through their debriefing.

The TFG propaganda machine often sells a greater number of defectors to the AMISOM and the international community, as a proof that they are delivering and that al-Shabaab is near to collapsing. Early January 2011, on a cluster of 6 defectors, only 2 were actually coming from Al-Shabaab, the others were either members of Hisbul Islaam or simply associated in a way or another with the TFG.

Beyond the discussion on why TFG officials consider telling stories to their key allies the best game in town, one should raise two major concerns. First, the TFG army is far from homogenous and many former ICU militias have been integrated into that body or in surrogate clan militias. This just follows the same regulations as in the 1990's: defeated militias join the winning one though they have not leading positions. It is more a sedimentary paradigm than militias cleansing. A significant section of those former ICU militias have not been involved in the various battles (because they do not want to help "Christians" defeat other Muslims) and parts of the "genuine" defectors are actually working to convince them to rally openly or not Al-Shabaab. These complicities can become very lethal as illustrated by the killings at Muna Hotel in August 2010.

The second concern is that the TFG has done nothing to prove young al-Shabaab fighters that they could have a living if they defect: there is no facility to gather the defectors, screen them and help them to get another life (vocational training and the like). Most often, as just explained,

they stay as fighters within surrogate clan militias or the TFG army. This is both dangerous and short-sighted. If economic incentives play a role in al-Shabaab recruitment, the TFG and its allies should be in a position to propose an alternative: this is hardly the case today after 4 years of AMISOM and TFG presence in the capital city…

In Gedo and Hiiraan, Somali militias faced also very difficult time despite the backing of Ethiopian forces and the indulgence of Kenya. While in Hiiraan, despite a first moment of panic of Al-Shabaab commanders who left the town, the situation is still under al-Shabaab's control, in Gedo, the fight was more bitter and only early March were the ASWJ militias and TFG troops able to get the control of that city. For the record, during the first offensive late February, those forces took refuge on the other side of the border, in Mandera (Kenya), to shell the city controlled by al-Shabaab and used schools and civilian buildings to do so. Al-Shabaab does not have the monopoly of this kind of deadly strategy.

Last October, Barre Aadan Shire Hiiraale forces and ASWJ Gedo fought one against the other. ASWJ Gedo was mostly made up of Rahanweyn and Dir fighters, while Barre Hiiraale fighters belonged in their greatest majority to Mareehaan clan. Al-Shabaab beaten, clan and political ambitions explained the tensions between the two groups. As often witnessed over the last three years, al-Shabaab is not always considered by Somalis as the paramount danger: it is only a very dangerous group that could be manipulated to get advantage on other clans or political groups. This fact deserves a much deeper thinking from many within the international community.

But Ethiopia changed its policy. Barre Hiiraale lost the leadership of the military and the TFG soldiers involved in Buulo Haawa fight belong to various clans with a prominence of Rahanweyn and Mareehaan. As witnessed also in Hiiraan, Ethiopia does not anymore believe its more powerful interlocutor, listens to many stakeholders and shows a more sensitiveness to clan issues. The time of 'Abdullaahi Yuusuf and 'Ali Mahamed Geedi seems over as far as those offensives reflect the change of mood in Addis-Ababa[66].

One can also add that this attack was a message to Kenya, since the Kenyan authorities seemed to have reached an agreement of no strategic aggression with al-Shabaab on the border until March 2011. This situation did not please Ethiopia and the troubles in Buulo Haawa were, one more time, a reminder of the dangers created by such passivity. The arrest of 9 Al-Shabaab officers, the participation of Kenyan forces in combats in Buulo Haawa and elsewhere as well as the public debate about Al-Shabaab recruitment networks in Kenya might mean that the lull is over.

4. Conclusion

One cannot conclude this section without raising questions on al-Shabaab military tactics. What has been happening late February and early March just duplicates the butchery that occurred at the very beginning of the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006. Although al-Shabaab conscripts were facing a professional and well equipped army, they just thought that waves of

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[66] However, one of the authors still believes that more time is needed to make a solid assessment. What has been happening over the last weeks provide the TF P Speaker with an increased influence on the ground at a time Addis-Ababa wants to get rid of the TFG President. Military successes may only be a condition for Meles Zenawi to reassert his influence in Mogadishu.

infantry fighters could defeat it. In a matter of few hours, all people recruited in November and December 2006 in Mogadishu to fight against Ethiopia were just dead.

While in rural areas, al-Shabaab has been able to play the clan cards in often smart ways (yet, not always), in Mogadishu their strategy looks childish. They do not have the military hardware to defeat the AMISOM and the human cost of their skirmishes is high for no result at all. One can assume that at the beginning, al-Shabaab promoted martyrdom but after so many defections, uproar among fighters and fighters butchered, one should look for other reasons. The less unreasonable one is that al-Shabaab is testing its newly trained fighters there and give them a direct experience of urban warfare. Yet, the amount of loses does not allow this to be the final answer.

Nevertheless, al-Shabaab is still a rational actor. After what appeared to them as a coordinated offensive in Gedo, Central Region and Mogadishu, its leaders called their troops to change strategy and go back to the more usual guerrilla tactics of hit and run and targeted killings. This shift of strategy (or the return to the 2007-2008 tactics) was made clear by statements made in Arabic on their websites.

One can play with paradoxical conjectures. On one side, the fact that this order was published in Arabic could be one further proof that al-Shabaab is obeying its al-Qâ'idah patrons since most local commanders do not read Arabic enough to get the meaning of that statement. On the other, one can sustain exactly the opposite. For nearly two years, al-Shabaab leadership enforced a ruthless and hopeless strategy that deprived the movement of hundreds of fighters. Writing such an order in Arabic gives a feeling that it has religious motivations and should not be argued, only swallowed: let us not forget that most al-Shabaab militias have a very rudimentary religious education focussed on few warlike episodes.

It cannot be by chance that a al-Shabaab commander, 'Abdinaasir Huseen 'Ali nicknamed Jaban ("Japan") after months under arrest was sentenced to death and executed by Shabaab for having killed innocent people at this very moment. This commander previously was in charge of targeted killings and hated by most civilians for that reason. He also was known to have robbed money transfer companies in Suuq Ba'aad (Qaran Express) and Bakaraaha (Dahabshiil local branch).

This move by al-Shabaab leadership alongside others described in the previous sections of this report intend to show that Shabaab intends to win back the popular support it has lost after the departure of the Ethiopian forces and the prohibition of humanitarian access throughout the drought.

There is no doubt that after the Ramadan offensive, what happened early March sounds as another defeat to that organization. Its reaction is to go back to amore accommodating stance with civilians, a more traditional (and effective) guerrilla tactics strengthened by the same techniques of fear and intimidation through targeted killings. To a large extent, this military victory has yet to find its political expression.

CHAPTER V
FUNDING AN APPARATUS AND RULING A POPULATION

The aim of this last chapter is to review two civilian components of al-Shabaab, specifically the way this organisation sustains itself and pays for a number of expenses that are necessary for its logistics and, linked to that purpose, the local administrative structures that have been put in place.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, we believe that the stronger input achieved by foreigners in the organisation is the setting up of bureaucratic institutions described in Chapter I that have allowed the movement to survive the killing of some of its commanders, while in the usual clan faction system those losses would have brought this armed group to a collapse or to recurrent splits.

This ability to function with a decent administration provides al-Shabaab with increased leverage on the population it controls. First and foremost, its troops are basically following orders, which is not so the case for the TFG army. Second, they keep their distance with the population and contribute by doing so to asserting the notion of an authority, of different nature than the social body. Third, it offers an image of order that is largely missing in the environment the population lives in. A last point is that working this way has also an impact on foreigners and diaspora since it reinforces the credibility of al-Shabaab and, therefore, the need to support it and endorse its political agenda overseas.

Al-Shabaab does not seem anymore eager to announce the establishment of an Islamic State. It may want, first, to control the capital city (which will be a surprising resilience of a State that is said to have collapsed for so long!). This silence may, more likely, be a hesitation on the practical consequences, especially the need to address the grievances of the population and its legitimate requests more than it does today. If al-Shabaab were willing to do so, it would need a much more powerful civilian organisation to not fail dramatically. To a large extent, the continued situation of Jihad provides this organisation with a very good excuse to escape many responsibilities linked to governing a population.

Yet, through the routinisation of a number of processes, al-Shabaab has been able to build what we should call local administrations. The way it did it is not radically different of what some clan factions or claimed governments did in the past. Yet, in many regards, al-Shabaab seems to do better than previous attempts. Clan sensitivities are considered in a more realistic and neutral way and corruption is much less apparent, while the Jihadi organisation builds again a public sphere and shows people that the authority cannot be manipulated (for long) through clan and personal networking.

However, this success is limited by different blockages. The level of fear is such that if those administrations collapse today, no one would be interested to keep some of its achievements. Despite a claim that all have to obey Shari'a, many incidents that involve al-Shabaab militias are kept unresolved by its own Courts: the very notion of justice is increasing put in question by the

population[67]. Last but not the least, al-Shabaab has yet to spell out its view on promoting development and economic growth beyond the destruction of forest and the export of charcoal.

This chapter is organized as follows. A first section looks at the way al-Shabaab sustains itself financially. Both external and internal sources of funding are reviewed. The reader should not expect many surprises going through that section. A second section tries to describe how local administrations are set up. The description points out to differences and tries to make sense of them. It also explores the rationale for taxation (al-Shabaab prefers the term *qitma*, services) and explains to what extend al-Shabaab is *de facto* engaged in a State-Building process. The issue of drought is also discussed to prove the reactivity of that organisation when it is challenged. The conclusion discusses the legacy of such a system.

1. Getting Money for al-Shabaab

One should keep in mind a number of patterns that single al-Shabaab out. First, despite now five years, there are few known cases of corruption within the organisation. That is a signal that the phenomenon is kept under control (though militias may steal or kill for looting). The implication is that the running costs of al-Shabaab are much less than if this organisation were the usual Somali armed movement. This plain argument should ring painfully at the ears of TFG's donors.

Another pattern is that Somalis are more impressed if the rules are enforced day after day and not only on occasions, by chance. To a certain extent, the possibility of al-Shabaab not paying salaries for a month would have a greater impact in sapping the credibility of the movement than the defection of a Commander. Efforts are therefore directed to that continuity and make a radical difference with any other organized bodies in Somalia (being the government of Somaliland, the TFG or the 'Abdi Qaybdid faction to take this example).

A third pattern is that, despite recurrent claims that al-Shabaab got millions of US dollars at any time from Saudi Sheekhs, Eritrea, pirates and al-Qâ'idah, this movement shows a genuine sense of saving money. For instance, the claim to get its share of the booty in all battles was a cheap way to get the ownership of heavy weapons, whose cost is much higher than the usual AK 47 and RPG. In the same way, the cost of ammunitions has become a crucial theological argument for Jihad, since a high price of bullets keeps the call for Jihad only at a rhetorical level. In the same way, al-Shabaab made efforts to have INGOs – international staff won't be allowed to stay but the supply line won't be cut - working in the health sector to guarantee that its wounded fighters would get adequate treatment.

As said, those behaviours show that either al-Shabaab medium rank has learnt a lot at the difference of their fellow citizens who are not Salafi Jihadists or that foreigners with a better understanding of the needs of an armed movement play a strategic role in those choices and their routinisation. Let us not bet on the first option.

One can review the various sources of funding. It should be clear that this description does not evoke anything very new, only sometimes procedures are interestingly original.

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[67] This is another justification for the speech made by Ahmed Godane late January 2011. By reminding regional governors that they were responsible for the behaviour of their militias, al-Shabaab leader wanted more attention to be paid to incidents between those latter and the lay population. See Chapter II for further details.

1.1. Collecting money outside the country.

At first, Islamists movements got financial support from wealthy Gulf States citizens (some being of Somali origin) and charities. The key moment is the month of Ramadan when *zakaah* is distributed. Until now, this system works with some success, though the TFG officials are not the last ones to visit the Gulf at that period to get their share[68]. These donations continue and the only real issue is to figure out how the money reaches Somalia or is used outside.

Donations by the Somali diaspora are more common and not placed in a specific moment of the year. There is a custom to collect money among diaspora people for clan matters (*qaaraan*) or more political issues. Al-Shabaab does not innovate in that regard. Again, the problem is how to make sure that the money reaches Somalia.

As illustrated recently by the arrest of some Somalis in the US, sending money through money transfer companies (*hawaala*) may be riskier even it the amounts are not so important (less than 20,000 USD in the quoted US case). This money can be sent through individuals but of course the new modus operandi of the Somali money transfer companies after 2001 can provide the law enforcement agencies data on whether the transfers are the same overtime (the identity of the sender and receiver are also much clearer). But, at least, two alternatives exist.

The first one is primitive but still operational. Someone has to travel to Somalia (it may be more often to Northern Somalia than Mogadishu), Djibouti or Nairobi and provide the money in cash. As an Eritrean diplomat found out in March 2009[69], this may not always be successful…

The other alternative is much more elaborated but needs a substantial amount of money, not a few thousands USD. The principle is elementary: a normal trading operation is organised (for instance importing sugar, wheat flowers, computers and staple commodities); the goods are sold in Somalia but the whole money (less a percentage) is given to al-Shabaab. The difficulty is to get a professional trader in Somalia able to do this. In general, al-Shabaab may select someone who has his family or many properties in Mogadishu. He does not need to share the same views as al-Shabaab and can be a true secular person. For him, at the end of the day, it is a licit commercial operation and he can make 15% benefit though he has not taken any risk. If he does not respect the conditions, he and his relatives can be targeted and his properties destroyed.

These commercial transactions seem to have happened on a regular basis because they cannot be traced. Only at the moment funds are gathered, can law enforcement agencies intervene.

There is also another way to move money: it is to make a donation for building an institution that is legitimate in Somalia: a big mosque, a health centre or a school. Donations are gathered in Somalia but there is no easy way to know actually the amount of money collected. Part of that money may be used for the announced purpose and the rest goes elsewhere.

A last remark can be made about State support. By far and large, the only State that has helped al-Shabaab is Eritrea. The authors have no views whether Asmara keeps doing so despite the UN sanctions passed in December 2009 and, more importantly, whether this support is strategic for al-Shabaab as claimed by the UN Monitoring Group without providing much evidence. As in 1993

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[68] As always, this money is never accounted by the Somali Central Bank…
[69] http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/636472/-/item/0/-/oixpit/-/index.html

when Sudan helped General Mahamed Faarah 'Aydiid, in 2006 when Eritrea provided military hardware and training to the ICU for letting ONLF fighters move into Ethiopia through Galgaduud, the main benefit a State could provide this kind of movement is logistical (but these days, an Eritrean passport is not a gift), training (Eritrea has a long tradition doing so for armed movements from Sudan and Ethiopia) and access to certain military supplies (heavy weapons and their ammunitions, explosives).

1.2. Getting funding from Somalia: the maximisation of the protection economy
The first think to keep in mind is that al-Shabaab does not work as the ICU which was dominated by Hawiye and focussed on south central Somalia (despite the attempt to set up an Islamic Court in Gaalka'ayo). Al-Shabaab, as explained in Chapter III, has a national reach (even international, some would say); the implication is not only that Puntland and Somaliland may become the target of subversive actions (as already happened in October 2008) but also that al-Shabaab supporters are present there, especially among the youth and the business class. A reminder of that connection is what happened in spring 2006. More than 200 fighters from Somaliland joined the ICU (and mostly al-Shabaab) to fight against the pro US factions' alliance. Puntland did not send many people but its financial contribution to the war was more important than Somaliland's.

Today, the situation is more confused since many Somali Salafi Sheekhs who in the past showed sympathy for al-Shabaab and encouraged the business people to support it financially are more reluctant to do so. Yet, al-Shabaab has not lost all his supporters in the Northern regions and has also cultivated personal links that can be mobilised if the situation got serious enough.

The first source of funding is provided by the business people who are in agreement with al-Shabaab. As alluded to in Chapter II, those people represent a genuine constituency in the Somali main markets though they are not often their biggest economic operators. In Bakaraaha for instance, many traders in the IT sectors are supportive of al-Shabaab but this sector is a minor one there. Social stratification therefore plays a role.

Al-Shabaab also has developed links with some economic operators on the basis of common interests. The charcoal export is a good case because it shows that al-Shabaab developed a more integrated agenda than ordinary thought. Not only al-Shabaab envisions the gains made by servicing those exporters at Baraawe and Kismaayo ports but also bets on jobs creation that would increase its popular support in both cities and the taxes they can raise.

This is only a small part of the money al-Shabaab is collecting. The main amount is provided by the protection economy. If people do not want to pay, they are subjected to threat and even to death to prove that obedience is not negotiable. However, there are some amazing specificities.

Starting February 2010, al-Shabaab decided that it would collect the *zakaah* of business people. This created an interesting theological discussion (as in Iran in 1980) because *zakaah* is one of the five pillars of Islam and therefore a direct junction between the believer and God. In mainstream Islam, the believer has to make his mind on the amount of money he should distribute to poor people around him once a year. Al-Shabaab made clear that it would make the right decision for all and also would decide when *zakaah* is collected.

Another argument broke out when people moved from one region to another and had to pay *zakaah* twice. This is not compatible with any reading of Islam but yet it happened. This created

a few bloody confrontations and proved that people should be given receipts to avoid misunderstandings. Al-Shabaab also published a decent booklet to explain people how to calculate the amount of *zakaah* they should pay.

Besides *zakaah*, al-Shabaab has been collecting *sadaqa fii sabiililaahi* (donations for God's grace) from the economic operators. This takes place under a veiled threat of retribution, if people are reluctant to exhibit their generosity. The debate can also go theological because *sadaqa* is supposed to be absolutely voluntary, which is not often the case.

In 2010, while for the first time al-Shabaab called for the centralisation of *zakaah* under its responsibility, it also formalized a taxation system (described in the second section of this chapter) and called it *qitma* (services). Interestingly enough in a Somali context, it requests people to pay for services it actually delivers and, more surprisingly, each region has developed its own set of taxes according to the characteristics of the local economy, which may intend to prove that al-Shabaab is more federalist than the current TFG...

The prohibition of *qaat* is also an interesting point since this question has divided al-Shabaab leadership for years. On the one hand, one faction is willing -yesterday and today- to forbid the imports of *qaat* since it is perceived as a drug. On the other, many commanders have a more open minded view point. Q*aat* distribution provides jobs for the poorest people; taxes are collected (1,000 USD by plane plus landing fees) and people could be allowed to chew it at home and only there as it happens for cigarette smokers. Over the last year, *qaat* has been allowed, prohibited and allowed again under those latter conditions.

The international community, led by the USA, has taken a uncompromising position on humanitarian access in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. The analysis supporting this decision sounds fragile to the authors. Moreover, the prohibition is basically impossible to enforce. Early 2011, two British NGOs (Muslim Aid UK and Islamic Relief UK) were working in areas controlled by the Jihadi movement through a mediation undertaken by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Some INGOs also use their local partners to keep their project alive (for instance in the livestock sector).

Al-Shabaab has spelled out its policy concerning INGOs. Without discussing here the status of the foreign staff, it seems that the cost to operate is 10,000 USD by year. In pure accounting terms, this is much cheaper than what the TFG and its multiple roadblocks cost over the same period. Yet, they want to exclude foreign witnesses but are ready to accept some of the activities of the NGOs, under the assumption that they screen their staff, have a full knowledge of the projects (including their budgets) and control all moves beyond the NGO HQs.

There are two other sources of funding, often quoted in the international press, that deserve a cautious analysis: kidnapping and piracy. Kidnapping is less an industry today in Somalia due to the overall security situation. Foreigners are very few and often entrenched behind AMISOM or local private armies (as in Gaalka'ayo). Yet, in the past, there is no doubt that al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islaam (among others) were adamant to get control of hostages since the ransoms became very high and that pure criminal greed could be concealed behind a political discourse framed by the hostility against the West and its spies.

A good indication that al-Shabaab is not bankrupt is that it has not yet released the hostages it got. For instance, in the case of the French secret agent, it seems to have added sensitive political conditions (concerning the release of its members condemned in Hargeysa after the

October 2008 bombings) besides the usual ransom. Therefore, there is no hurry to get additional financial resources.

Piracy is much less simple to assess because there are many different layers of explanations[70]. In the West, often, there is a trend that would like to merge all threats in one common narrative. For instance after 9/11 some journalists wanted to associate Ussama ben Laden and the Sierra Leone's RUF. Others tried to link al-Qâ'idah and Iraq and were more successful… for a while. In Somalia, many wanted from the very beginning to associate the Islamists and the pirates despite the fact that pirates were operating from Puntland and an area from south central Somalia that was not under Islamists control. Former staff of the UN Monitoring Group were not the last to agitate those allegations. More recently early March 2011 an AP dispatch again created a new momentum, arguing that al-Shabaab got 20% of all ransoms.

The facts are as follows. In 2006, despite huge amounts of money proposed by the pirates, the ICU obliged them to stop operating in the areas they controlled. Theformer started again because of the collapse of the ICU. In Puntland, pirates' gangs have little stamina for Islamism and donations seem the most unlikely. In the Harardheere and Hobyo areas, the situation can be more ambiguous. Those benefiting directly from piracy have never shown a specific religious inclination; what they have proved over times is to be wise business people and respectful of clans regulations. Over the last three years, al-Shabaab has never authorized pirates to use the ports it controls. Yet, pirates' leaders have been able to move freely in areas controlled by the Jihadi organisation.

Scenarios could be three, according to the data collected. First, there is no link and al-Shabaab is right when it denies any connections with the pirates. Honest Muslims do not interact with thugs. Second, al-Shabaab and the pirates actually recruit among the same sub-clans (Haber Gidir/Saleebaan/Faarah and Haber Gidir/'Ayr/Absiye) and the magnificence of their way of live requires the pirates to offer money to their relatives. Moreover, in Somalia as in other countries, it is seen as common wisdom to offer some money to the powerful actors who may interfere with your business. Al-Shabaab benefits indirectly from piracy but has no formal deals with the pirates. The third scenario is that a secret deal has been struck between some al-Shabaab commanders (in interviews, the names of Hasan Afrah and Sheekh 'Ali Dheere were often quoted)[71] and the pirates.

The authors are divided on which scenario is the most likely. Scenario two has been valid for long and the sense is that eventually scenario 3 is going to be true but further evidence is needed.

2. Building local administrations

After two decades of civil war, Somalia has developed certain procedures to keep security at the local level. Those procedures have been analysed by INGOs and donors as they could provide

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[70] See Roland Marchal's contribution in James Cockayne and Adam Lupel, eds. *Peace Operations and Organized Crime: Enemies or Allies?,* London, Routledge, 2011; and Roland Marchal, "Somali Pircay: the local contexts of a global obsession", *Humanity,* vol. 2, n° 1, May 2011.

[71] Hasan Afrah belongs to the Saleebaan clan and also to the same sub-sub clan as the most important pirates' leader, Mahamed Afweyne (who initiated the kidnapping of the two French secret agents). Sheekh 'Ali Dheere is the spokesperson of al-Shabaab and belongs to the Murusade clan. This may explain why recently a new gang that recruited mostly among Murusade started operating near Harardheere, far from their clan territory, to say the least…

a blueprint for a more national process. Yet, the localized nature of those arrangements could not be duplicated without putting at risk the whole situation.

Clan factions and the various alleged governments, including the TFG, therefore always claimed territories but never were able to build decent local administration structures. The very notion of controlling a territory had to be understood in its most rudimentary terms: no other political actor was able to have a military presence.

Another paradox of the situation is that if compared to Somaliland and Puntland, the presence of the State has been much deeper in southern Somalia and therefore an administrative culture should have survived despite the duration of the war. It is not the case and one can blame the political elites in that part of the former Somalia to have shown so little determination to rebuild even at the most modest level a State.

Yet, there are two systemic reasons that explained this failure and the difficulties for those elites to radically challenge this stalemate. One is the demographic distribution of clans as well as the balance between different modes of productions. A quick glance at a map representing the clan territories proves that in Somaliland and Puntland clans are living together but mostly in towns and elsewhere the pastoral economy is arch dominant; meanwhile in the South (except Galgaduud and south Mudug), clans are intertwined and both urbanisation and farming have taken the lead on the pastoral economy. Therefore clan competitions can potentially be more numerous and intractable. The second systemic difficulty is that no faction has ever been powerful enough in the civil war to actually control an area and its urban centres for long: always compromises with sections of the local population were needed and the very sense of absolute domination never was reflected by the reality; bargaining was also based on fragmenting the local populations in different groups and making alliance with one of them.

Al-Shabaab experiment in local administration has to be understood in that context. The aim is not to build a proper administration but govern populations that sooner or later would have to contribute to Jihad. Yet, this is not what is happening on the ground. On the one hand, al-Shabaab got involved in local situations and could not just enforce simplistic rules. On the other, although the Jihadi project is paramount, the routinisation of the state of war means that cadres are increasingly involved in mundane issues and are also looking for concrete personal achievements. The echo created by dissident al-Shabaab commanders in January 2011 just reflects this tension between those who believe that the establishment of an Islamic State would be the most powerful message to their opponents and those who fear that the energy and resources spent in that direction may be lost for waging Jihad.

2.1. Taking over a region
There is a genuine methodology used by al-Shabaab over the years. The first thing is to create a conflict (or use an existing one) in the area to create the perception of a fast deteriorating situation and use the conflict to covert the targeted killing of potential opponents. Among them, one should single out three social categories. Influential elders as well as civil society activists who are too outspoken and not inclined to Salafi ideas have to be eliminated. The last group is made up of *wadaads* who may express differing views than the organisation on the political process and the implementation of Shari'a.

Whenever a region is taken over, al-Shabaab implements the second step of its agenda. Its fighters go to all houses owned by people who were working for previous administrations and

search for weapons and documents that would illustrate their connections with the TFG and its international allies. The properties of the key leaders are looted, though in the descriptions the authors got, no one was able to say whether the booty went to the organisation or to the militias who did it.

As alluded to in Chapter IV, there are two main differences with the past. The first is that the old militias have had to escape to save their live. They won't be allowed to simply integrate the new ruling military forces. Eventually some may be allowed to do so but they would have to give up their weapons and go first to a training camp to follow several weeks of "re-orientation". The second difference is that the clans that benefited from the former administrations are humiliated as transparently as possible. As explained in Chapter III, it is less a way to promote those who were humiliated than to use the taste for revenge to build a constituency.

The third moment is also framed by coercion. Al-Shabaab wants the areas it controls absolutely secure since it has a limited manpower and needs to use it on the borders with its enemy. It is very common that after a few weeks, the Court controlled by al-Shabaab decides to amputate a thief or stone a woman (or a girl). The rationale is to make the population understand that al-Shabaab won't mollify and that Shari'a is enforced without qualifications (a claim that no one can decently oppose).

The last moment is the establishment of a Shura that would meet twice a week and handle the problems of the city or district. What is interesting is that al-Shabaab plays the clan card more than it is used by it. Let us give examples.

In Merka, after taking over al-Shabaab gave a greater space to "minority" clans (see chapter III) but did not deny the presence of those that were powerful under previous administrations. Their share was smaller and the involvement of a couple of al-Shabaab operatives meant that those clans would not be able to reassert themselves in the Shura without clashing with the Jihadi group. For once, humility was on their agenda.

In Kismaayo and Lower Jubba (al-Shabaab seems to often share the idea that a district is congruent with its capital), the situation was different. At first, the 25 member Shura reflected the involvement in the battle to take control of the port city. Two major clans were given the upper hand on the Shura, even if others were nominally represented: Mareehaan and Ogaadeen (plus a few seats for the Harti). But, this setting was creating uproar among the Hawiye (Sheekhaal especially) and the Dir (above all, Biimaal) clans. After a short while, Ibraahim al-Afghani pushed for amendment of the Shura and Gaalje'el and Biimaal got their seats.

Jowhar is a different case. The capital city of Middle Shabeelle was taken by a coalition of Ogaadeen and Murusade (plus a few 'Ayr and Abgaal/Reer Mataan) militias. To a large extent, the Shura became an instrument in settling old scores. The Shura indeed was including Daarood and Rahanweyn representatives plus Gaalje'el and Jareer beyond the usual Abgaal sub-clans. In particular, the Harti Abgaal[72] sub-clan that used to dominate the region throughout the civil war got as many representatives as the Jareer! The inclusion of the Gaalje'el in the Shura was not only an acknowledgement of their military role in the battles to take over Middle Shabeelle but

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[72] Among prominent Harti Abgal, one should quote the former leader of Jowhar was Mahamed 'Umar Habib Dheere who belongs to Harti Abgaal/Warsengeli clan and the TFG President, Sheekh Shariif Sheekh Ahmed who is Harti Abgaal/ Agoonyar.

also a reference to the long conflicts they waged in the region in the 1990s[73]; No need to say that the Harti Abgaal clan is furious and pretends that behind al-Shabaab, there is a coalition of allogenous clans that want to confiscate its land... This humiliation is in the view of the authors a direct consequence of the role Mahamed Dheere played against the Islamists before June 2006 and after January 2007.

In Beledweyne, al-Shabaab played a different card but it is unsure whether it is going to work for clan reasons. In the 1990s, the conflict in Beledweyne was framed by the opposition of two groups, the Hawaadle on the one side and on the other the Gaalje'el, the Jeje'el, the Jareer and the Sheekhaal. After 2007, Hisbul Islaam was supported by the Hawaadle and al-Shabaab by a coalition of other clans. In July 2010, al-Shabaab got the support of the Hawaadle and took over the city (rumours mentioned that the Hisbul Islaam governor received a significant amount of money and sold his heavy weapons to the rival movement!) but bet on the "minorities within Hawwadle. The conflict situation is indeed largely due to Hawaadle internal divisions. There is one important sub-clan, 'Ali Medhaweyne, that pretends to the leadership of Beledweyne at all costs. Because the other Hawaadle components are much smaller, they have to endorse this view while their interest is different. They have common borders with groups 'Ali Medhaweyne fought against and have (as Hawiye) common enemies (notably the Ethiopian Daaroods). Al-Shabaab is therefore trying to keep a fragile coalition made up of Hawaadle "minority" sub-clans and a representation of the other coalition by allocating positions to both in the region.

2.2 Building an authority
The policies put in place are remarkable by their bureaucratic procedures. For instance, all NGOs would have to provide their archives and any data on the staff (including foreign), their budget would be checked and questions made on salaries and the like. This was what Siyaad Barre was doing and the dream of all faction leaders for years. When al-Shabaab did loot equipments, there was some loose political justification. However, there is a permanent order to grab whatever drugs and medical instruments that can be used to cure the wounded fighters. Except that, al-Shabaab did not "confiscate" other medicines and medical equipment.

For the time being this movement seems to have three main priorities. First, al-Shabaab pays attention to the Quranic schools; it has limited the number of the audience at 50 students and made sure that all students would find a place for the religious teaching. They even mobilize some of their members if the teachers are not numerous enough. They also intervene in those places and talk specifically about Jihad.

The second priority is the health sector. There is of course a vested interest to keep it alive or even to develop it since curing the wounded fighters is a heavy duty (too heavy, it seems, after the Ramadan offensive in August 2010). In Merka, two al-Shabaab staff have been appointed at the hospital; their duty is to make da'wa every morning at 7 A.M. and make sure that the personnel is on time (if not, they are sent home and lose a day salary); the last duty is to check the CVs of the health staff and make sure that their degrees are not fake.

Al-Shabaab also appointed a regional coordinator for health who has to make sure that any health emergency is given care of. This regional coordinator would ask local NGOs to carry out

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[73] At one point, General Mahamed Faarah 'Aydiid was able to control Mahaas and Jalalaqsi thanks to the Gaalje'el clan

some specific tasks or respond to requests made by the population outside the main urban centres.

One should highlight the fact that they are developing in sectors (education and health) where the social demands are the highest and where popularity could be won easily. One should also notice that they entertain the students with da'wa but do not interfere with the curricula of the schools, though they publicize the learning of Arabic against English at any time.

The third sector they develop is the justice system. In all regions they control, Islamic Courts have been established and the judges follow the Hanbali and Shafi'i codes[74]. Hanbali is the preferred code for the Salafis but in general Somalis use the Shafi'i one. The judges have to be close to the organisation. Again, their behaviour is congruent with what was happening under Mahamed Siyaad Barre.

For private cases, the Court allows the elders to be involved. The court has to be informed about the outcome of the case. If one party is unhappy, then the Court may decide to intervene and make the final ruling. No external actors are allowed in case of penal cases and Shari'a is supposed to be enforced with no hesitation. But there are moments when the judges may decide to change the character of a case. For instance, property rights in Somalia are today a very cumbersome issue since fake documents are often used to build a case and get some money. The judges have made those cases criminal cases because someone has been abusing the authority of the State.

A caveat to that reassertion of the authority is the complacency when al-Shabaab militias misbehave. It is difficult of course to be sure that it is a definite policy but in the few cases that were discussed publicly, al-Shabaab did its best to protect its own fighters even if the organisation had to pay diyya.

Especially because of the drought but also for the sake of providing the Shura and al-Shabaab with some budget, systems of taxation have been put in place. The interesting aspect is that al-Shabaab did not try to polish the old system (as Somaliland and Puntland did) but built a new one that takes into account the war situation. While in Somaliland and Puntland, the main (and often sole) source of the revenues is the import/export trade, al-Shabaab has been trying to enlarge the fiscal plate.

First, of course, commercial operations are taxed at about 10%[75]; public transportation has also to pay a reasonable fee. At this point although tariffs are reasonable, this is still very close to Somaliland and Puntland systems of taxation. Differences are on three important aspects.

First, all salaries are taxed 5% because of the drought but one may suspect that this tax won't disappear overnight. The money goes to a Drought Committee that either gives cash or provided the affected people with food and cloths. When the collected amount is not important enough, al-Shabaab goes to the market place and asks the traders to make a ("voluntary") contribution.

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[74] in Sunni Islam, there are four legal schools (Madhab) accepted : Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maleki and Hanafi. A Madhab is a school of thought or method of interpreting religious material in the three major areas: belief, religious practice and Shari'a;

[75] In Kismaayo, selling a camel generates 1.5 Million Somali shillings (Sosh) – roughly 50 USD - while the price of the camel is about 10 million Sosh. A cow would generate a tax of 0.5 Million Sosh for a price of 5 to 6 Millions Sosh and a goat would generate 100,000 Sosh for a price of 700,000 Sosh.

Second, al-Shabaab intends to put a levy on the houses that are rented. This is highly uncommon in post civil war Somalia; a side effect of this decision is that people have to prove that they are the legitimate owners of the houses they rent. Compared to the many promises made by the TNG and TFG on clarifying the property rights, this is a clear achievement.

Third, al-Shabaab has not showed a will to evict people who are settled in buildings that belonged to the Somali State or other public entities. However, they request them to pay a fee for the use of public properties.

Before the offensive of late February 2011, it had become clear that all those revenues were used to counter the unpopularity created by the refusal to give humanitarian access to the areas affected by the drought. While, months ago, al-Shabaab was full of contempt for those who were arguing about the predicament created by the drought, a number of demonstrations in areas al-Shabaab thought were fully under its control showed that drought riots could add to its deteriorating relations with the Somali population (see Chapter II for other reasons).

The anti WFP discourse is easy when people do not face hunger. This was not anymore the case in the last months of 2010 and al-Shabaab had to react. Setting up this taxation system is a first answer and at the difference of other armed groups the money collected was used for the right people.

One can wonder whether this taxation system would stop with the drought (without discussing here the military situation). The authors are convinced that it will last because the past months demonstrated to al-Shabaab the need to respond to public grievances in other ways than the discourse on Jihad and the coercion, or to use a Gramscian jargon, to better balance coercion and hegemony. The difficult military situation provides them another reason to regain the sympathy of the population that needs more than da'wa and roads to make a living or to sympathise with a Jihadi organisation.

3. Conclusion

Al-Shabaab has been able to build an impressive system for collecting funds. In order to do so, it has been mobilising not only its supporters among the Somali diaspora but foreigners who share its global Jihadi agenda. While techniques for remitting funds are not very sophisticated, they are also not easily traceable. Al-Shabaab may benefit from this support because its international image keeps being more positive than its perception inside Somalia.

A notable aspect is that State support to this movement is minimal and this only fact shows its determination to keep receiving money from outside and creating its own source of revenue inside Somalia (including Somaliland and Puntland).

Intimidation and protection are the two faces of the same policy towards the Somali private sector. Despite a real support in some strata of the business class (all over Somalia and not only in south central Somalia or in Mogadishu), al-Shabaab has been putting the main economic operators under strong pressure. Beyond those revenues, al-Shabaab has benefited from certain economic activities because they generate revenues in the ports it controls and gives new economic opportunities to the population.

Starting February 2010, a taxation system has been built that needs local administrations to be effective and contributes to strengthen them. The main reasons to develop this system has been the drastic negative impacts of drought and the need for al-Shabaab not to be accused to let the population die for not accepting international aid.

Al-Shabaab reacted slowly to this challenge but over the last months, undertook a number of rescue operations that prove the population that it is both sincere in its refusal of international aid and its will to provide an alternative. The current degradation of its military situation –if lasting- would raise the question of a shift of priorities and of the current allocation of resources.

Willingly or not, the structures of a nascent Islamic State are taking shape. This attempt is much more developed than any other throughout the civil war. By coercion and manipulation, al-Shabaab is rebuilding a public realm, social services and the sense of legality. One may think about Charles Tilly well-known thesis: States makes war and wars make State.

But two questions would deserve more discussion in the next months: whether the level of violence is such that institutions and rules set up by al-Shabaab won't survive its military defeat; whether the new recognition given to the population would affect the strict logic of the current Salafi–Jihadi agenda supported by al-Shabaab leadership.