



## Somalia

### Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2000](#)

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
February 23, 2001

Somalia (1) has been without a central government since its last president, dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, fled the country in 1991. Subsequent fighting among rival faction leaders resulted in the killing, dislocation, and starvation of thousands of persons and led the United Nations to intervene militarily in 1992. Following the U.N. intervention, periodic attempts at national reconciliation were made, but they did not succeed. In September 1999, during a speech before the U.N. General Assembly, Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh announced an initiative on Somalia to facilitate reconciliation under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development. In March formal reconciliation efforts began with a series of small focus group meetings of various elements of Somali society in Djibouti. In May in Arta, Djibouti, delegates representing all clans and a wide spectrum of Somali society were selected for a "Conference for National Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia." The Conference opened on June 15 with more than 900 delegates, including representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). In July the Conference adopted a charter for a 3-year Transitional National Administration and selected a 245-member Transitional Assembly, which included members of Somali minority groups and 25 women. On August 26, the assembly elected Abdiqassim Salad Hassan as Transitional President, and he was sworn in on August 28. Ali Khalif Gallayr was named Prime Minister in October, and on October 20, the Prime Minister appointed the 25-member Cabinet. Administrations in the northwest (Somaliland) and northeast (Puntland) areas of the country do not recognize the results of the Djibouti Conference, nor do several Mogadishu-based factional leaders. Serious interclan fighting occurred in part of the country, notably in the central regions of Hiran and Middle Shabelle, and the southern regions of Gedo and Lower Shabelle. Hussein Aideed is the leader of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) (SNA), which ceased to assert that it was the government of the entire country following the Djibouti Conference. Unlike in the previous year, there were no skirmishes between the SNA and other militias. No group controls more than a fraction of the country's territory. There is no national judicial system.

Leaders in the northeast proclaimed the formation of the "Puntland" state in July 1998. Puntland's leader publicly announced that he did not plan to break away from the remainder of the country, but the Puntland Administration did not participate in the Djibouti Conference or recognize the Transitional National Administration that emerged from it. In the northwest, the "Republic of Somaliland" continued to proclaim its independence within the borders of former British Somaliland, which had obtained independence from Britain in 1960 before joining the former Italian-ruled Somalia. Somaliland has sought unsuccessfully international recognition since 1991. Somaliland's government includes a parliament, a functioning civil court system, executive departments organized as ministries, six regional governors, and municipal authorities in major towns. The ban in Puntland on all political parties remained in place; however, in June the Somaliland ban on political parties was lifted.

After the withdrawal of the last U.N. peacekeepers in 1995, clan and factional militias, in some cases supplemented by local police forces established with U.N. help in the early 1990's, continued to function with varying degrees of effectiveness. Repeated intervention by Ethiopian troops helped to maintain order in Gedo region, a base of support for a local radical Islamic group called Al'Ittihad. In Somaliland over 60 percent of the budget was allocated to maintaining a militia and police force composed of former troops. In September a Somaliland presidential decree, citing national security concerns, in the wake of the conclusion of the Djibouti conference, arrogated special powers to the police and the military. Also in September, the Transitional Government began recruiting for a new 4,000-officer police force to restore order in Mogadishu. In November the Transitional Government requested former soldiers to register and enroll in training camps to form a national army. Over 10,000 former soldiers were enlisted by year's end. Police and militia committed numerous human rights abuses throughout the country.

The country is very poor with a market-based economy in which most of the work force is employed as

subsistence farmers, agro-pastoralists, or pastoralists. The principal exports are livestock and charcoal; there is very little industry. Insecurity and bad weather continued to affect the country's already extremely poor economic situation. The country's economic problems caused a serious lack of employment opportunities and led to pockets of malnutrition in southern areas of the country.

The human rights situation is poor, and serious human rights abuses continued throughout the year. Citizens' right to change their government is circumscribed by the absence of an established central authority. Many civilian citizens were killed in factional fighting, especially in the Gedo, Hiran, Lower Shabelle, and Middle Shabelle regions. In Somaliland and Puntland, police used lethal force while disrupting demonstrations. The use of landmines, reportedly by the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), resulted in several deaths. Kidnaping remained a problem. There were some reports of the use of torture by Somaliland and Puntland Administrations and militias. Prison conditions are harsh and life threatening. Arbitrary arrest and detention remained problems. Somaliland authorities detained a number of persons for participation in the Djibouti Conference. The judicial system relied in most regions on some combination of traditional and customary justice, Shari'a (Islamic) law, and the pre-1991 Penal Code; there were occasional reports of harsh physical punishments by Islamic Shari'a courts, including public whippings and stonings. Citizens' privacy rights were limited. There were restrictions on the freedoms of the press, assembly, association, and religion. There were restrictions on freedom of movement. There were numerous attacks on international nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). Violence against women and discrimination against women remained problems. The abuse of children, including the nearly universal practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) remained a problem. Abuse and discrimination against ethnic minorities in the various clan regions continued. There is no effective system for the protection of worker rights, and there were isolated areas where local gunmen forced minority group members to work for them. Child labor and trafficking also were problems.

## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

#### a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

Political violence and banditry have been endemic since the revolt against Siad Barre, who fled the capital in January 1991. Since that time, tens of thousands of persons, mostly noncombatants, have died in interfactional and interclan fighting. Although reliable statistics were not available, numerous persons were killed during the year. On January 7, militia of the Matan Abdulle, an Abgal sub-clan, killed five persons and injured six in an attack on a bus in North Mogadishu. Observers believe that the probable target of the attack was businessman Mohamed Hassan Ali, alias "Maqarre," who was killed in the attack. On January 31, fighting between the Mohammed Zuber and Aulihyan sub-clans began in Doble (Lower Juba region) and lasted for several days; numerous persons were killed and hundreds injured. On February 4 in Lower Shabelle, fighting between the Islamic Court Militias and the Rahanweyn Resistance Army resulted in the deaths of approximately 15 persons and injuries to 10 others. On March 14, fierce fighting near the village of Buulo Fulaay between fighters from the Rahanweyn Resistance Army and militias from the Rahanweyn Salvation Army and the Digil Salvation Army resulted in the deaths of over 30 persons and injuries to numerous others. On March 19 in the village of Harardere (Mudug region), fighting between militias of the Abgal Wa'aysle sub-clan and the Habr Gedr Ayer resulted in the deaths of five persons. On March 20 near Bullo Burti (Hiran region), fighting between 2 Dir sub-clans resulted in the deaths of at least 20 persons and injuries to 10 others. On April 10, the Samawada Rehabilitation and Development Organization (SAREDO), a local NGO, accused the Islamic Court militias in Merka, Lower Shabelle, of killing one of its guards, Abukar Ali Ismail. The militias reportedly killed Ismail after he refused their order to disarm. On May 20, in Buulo Waambo, Kurtunwaarey District, Jiiddo clan militia killed seven members of the Garre clan, reportedly in retaliation for the earlier killing of two Jiiddo clan members in Hilowgey village by the Garre clan. Between May 26 and 28, in Guri Ceel District, Galgaduud region, fighting between the Habr Gedr and Galjeel clans resulted in the deaths of 13 persons. On June 9, two members of warlord Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan's" militia murdered Jama Habeb, the commander of the militia, reportedly because of internal conflict within the militia. On June 22 in Qoryoley district, fighting between militias of the Garre and Jiiddo clans resulted in the deaths of over 30 persons; the clashes began after a Garre clansman killed a Jiiddo clansman.