

The Somali government was plagued by political infighting in 2014, as parliament brought a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed. The incident marked the second consecutive year in which a prime minister was dismissed.

The Shabaab, an extremist group that once controlled most of southern Somalia, remained an active presence in the country despite significant gains made by the joint Somali National Army–African Union mission against it. The Shabaab attacked the presidential palace three times in 2014 and killed five members of parliament in targeted assassinations. In September, Shabaab commander Ahmed Abdi Godane was killed by a U.S. drone attack. Following Godane's death, the Somali government provided amnesty for Shabaab defectors through the end of the year; the administration announced in late September that more than 500 militants had already accepted the offer. In December, the Shabaab attacked an African Union military base in Somalia in retaliation for Godane's assassination, killing three Ugandan soldiers and a civilian. Subsequently, Somali government forces captured Shabaab intelligence chief Zakariya Ismail Ahmed Hersi.

Although the government remained publicly committed to holding a constitutional referendum in 2015 and national elections in 2016, little was done in 2014 to develop the country's electoral framework. Critical election-related legislation, including laws on an election commission and political parties, had yet to be drafted by year's end, and government officials were privately considering alternative options.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Political Rights: 0 / 40 [Key]

A. Electoral Process: 0 / 12

Prior to fall 2012, the Somali state had largely ceased to exist and had no governing authority. In September 2012, Somalia established a new government and drafted a provisional constitution in an attempt to usher in the country's first permanent government in more than 20 years. The constitution established a 275-member House of the People, with members to be elected to four-year terms. In the interim, Somali traditional elders appointed the provisional members. The provisional legislature elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to a four-year term. An Upper House of Parliament, which would have 54 members, has yet to be formed. The provisional constitution outlines the expectation that women be included in all branches of government and includes a nondiscrimination clause that specifically mentions women.

In December 2014, parliamentarians close to the president passed a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Ahmed, who had been embroiled in a public feud with Mohamud. The incident marked the second dismissal of a prime minister in as many years. President Mohamud appointed Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, then Somali ambassador to the United States, as Ahmed's replacement.

The semiautonomous region of Puntland in northeastern Somalia has a 66-member legislature nominated by clan elders to five-year terms. A new legislature was approved by a constituent assembly in December 2013 and included 34 first-time parliamentarians. Puntland's president is elected by the legislature and

may serve up to two five-year terms. Though plans were made for the regional government's first multiparty presidential election in January 2014, the election was postponed. Instead, legislators selected Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gas as president over incumbent Abdirahman Mohamed Farole.

Relations between Puntland and federal authorities in Mogadishu have been tense. In August 2014, the Puntland government withdrew members of parliament and other officials serving in federal institutions in a dispute over the Mudug region, which the federal government had attempted to include as part of a new state. The situation normalized in October after the two governments signed a cooperation agreement.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation: 0 / 16

No effective or legally recognized political parties currently exist. The political process is driven largely by clans: traditional kinship networks that are the pillars of Somali social and political organization. The four largest clans—Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Digil-Mirifle—exercise outsize influence.

A parliamentary committee is currently developing legislation that would create regulations for a political party system. Among the considerations is whether political parties can be formed on the basis of clan identity.

Parliamentary representation is determined by the so-called 4.5 formula, a quota system under which the four majority clans each receive 61 delegates while the remaining minority clans receive 31 delegates combined. Critics of the formula point out that it codifies the dominant role of majority clans in the political system. The process by which clan leaders doled out parliamentary seats in 2012 was opaque and reportedly rife with bribery and nepotism.

C. Functioning of Government: 0 / 12

Although the new parliament was highly regarded when it took power in 2012, a lack of member commitment and political infighting have stifled its effectiveness. In October 2014, Speaker of Parliament Mohamed Osman Jawari announced that a \$600 fine will be levied against parliamentarians who fail to attend legislative sessions.

Corruption is rampant in Somalia. A 2013 UN Monitoring Group report on Somalia and Eritrea indicated that 80 percent of withdrawals from Somalia's central bank were made for private purposes. In 2014, the monitoring group alleged that the president and a former foreign minister conspired with U.S.-based law firm Shulman Rogers to steal funds from overseas Somali assets.

In September 2014, the government announced a campaign, run by the Ministry of Information, to raise public awareness of the country's corruption problem. The government also announced it would rewrite several high-profile business contracts, including its oil deal with Shulman Rogers. In October, Musa Haji Mohamed Ganjab, a presidential adviser and prominent businessman, was accused of leaking arms to the Shabaab; Ganjab vehemently denied the charges. Somalia ranked 174 out of 175 countries and territories surveyed in Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index. Corruption is also pervasive in Puntland, where authorities have been complicit in piracy.

Somali citizens have little power to exert influence over the system, either as individuals or through civil society. Citizens rarely have relationships with or access to their local members of parliament. There are

few accountability mechanisms for government officials; to the extent that these mechanisms exist, they largely come from the international community.

Civil Liberties: 2 / 40

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief: 1 / 16

While the provisional constitution calls for freedom of speech and the press, the new government has taken a heavy-handed approach toward the media. Radio is the primary news medium in Somalia. Internet and mobile telephone services are widely available in large cities, but poverty and illiteracy limit access.

In September, Somalia's cabinet passed a controversial media law, to be presented to parliament for adoption, that permits censorship by the Ministry of Information, requires broadcasters to seek permission to air foreign media, prohibits the dissemination of material "harming the country, the people or the religion," and levies hefty fines for breaching an undefined code of ethics. Local journalist organizations claimed they were excluded from the drafting process after expressing concerns about the law. Domestic and international rights organizations characterized the legislation as overly restrictive.

Somalia remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 53 journalists have been killed since 1992. In February 2014, state intelligence detained and beat journalists Mohamed Haji Bare and Ibrahim Mohamed after they aired stories about an explosion that harmed the deputy governor of Lower Shabelle region. In June, radio journalist Yusuf Ahmed Abukar, a critic of both the Shabaab and the Somali government, was killed by a bomb attached to his car. In August, the government shut down Radio Shabelle, arresting 19 journalists. Journalists alleged that the crackdown was retribution for the network's criticism of President Mohamud, who had recently accused Somalia media outfits of sympathizing with Shabaab. The incident followed the mass arrest of 11 journalists from various news outlets who attended an opposition press conference. In October, gunmen shot and wounded Somali Channel Television journalist Abdirisak Jama, a major critic of the government's new media bill.

In Puntland, in August authorities briefly detained Radio Daljir reporter Fatima Yusuf, who had recently talked to Voice of America about a group of soldiers who took over a state media station demanding unpaid salaries. In November, Radio Daljir journalist Abdirisak Ali Abdi was killed by unknown gunman. The following month, the regional administration raided Radio Garowe after it aired a report about demonstrations against government taxes.

Nearly all Somalis are Sunni Muslims, but there is a very small Christian community. Both Somalia's provisional constitution and Puntland's charter recognize Islam as the official religion, though the constitution does include religious freedom clauses. Anyone accused of apostasy risks execution by the Shabaab, which has also denied religious freedom to moderate Muslims and has caused deep offense among many Somalis by destroying the graves of Sufi saints.

The education system is severely degraded due to the breakdown of the state.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights: 0 / 12

Freedom of assembly has not been respected amid ongoing instability and violence in Somalia. Many

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies have reduced or suspended their activities in the country in recent years. According to the Aid Worker Security Database, six Somali aid workers were killed and one abducted in 2014.

Labor unions are beginning to expand their operations. In March 2014, the Somali government ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s conventions on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, and the Worst Forms of Child Labor. In June, the Federation of Somali Trade Unions, Somali Congress of Trade Unions, and the National Union of Somali Journalists wrote a joint letter to the Somali foreign minister requesting that he look into worker exploitation and improve working conditions in the country. In October, the three organizations met to identify strategies to curb corruption in the Ministry of Labor.

F. Rule of Law: 0 / 16

A weak judicial system functions at the national level. The provisional constitution outlines a judicial framework that includes the creation of a Constitutional Court, Federal Government courts, and Federal Member State courts, but these institutions have yet to be established. An independent expert commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council found that the judicial system was ineffective, thus denying Somalis the right to justice and equal protection under the law. The harshest codes are enforced in areas under Shabaab control, where people convicted of theft or other minor crimes are flogged or have their limbs amputated, often in public.

The absence of functional democratic institutions over a period of many years has given way to a lawless environment. Residents must also contend with abuses committed by warlords, clan leaders, and the Shabaab in the absence of government control in several areas of the country. The Shabaab continues to control large swaths of the south-central region. President Mohamud acknowledged in August 2014 that the group regularly tries to infiltrate various government institutions.

Most Somalis share the same ethnicity, but clan divisions have long fueled violence. The larger, more powerful clans continue to dominate political life and are able to use their strength to harass weaker clans.

Same-sex sexual activity is punishable by up to three years in prison. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) individuals are subject to broad social stigma and hostility. They face harsh punishments in areas controlled by the Shabaab.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: 1 / 16

Although all Somalis have constitutionally protected freedom of movement, the Shabaab, warlords, armed militias, and others often inhibit this freedom. The autonomy and individual rights of Somali citizens are severely restricted by the insecurity in the country, both in government and Shabaab-controlled areas.

The provisional constitution protects the right to own and use property. While the economy is a relatively bright spot in Somalia, it is largely informal and severely restricted by the conflict.

Women in Somalia face considerable discrimination. Although outlawed under the new constitution, nearly all Somali girls undergo some form of female genital mutilation. Sexual violence is rampant due to lawlessness and impunity for perpetrators, and rape victims are often stigmatized. The Shabaab imposes

crude versions of Sharia (Islamic) law in areas under its control, banning music, films, and certain clothing. In one area it has prohibited men and women from walking together or talking in public.

Of the 275 seats in Somalia's parliament, women hold 38, or 14 percent, falling short of the country's 30-percent quota. In September 2014, the women's caucus, the Somali Women Parliamentarians Association, presented recommendations on how to promote women's political participation and gender equality to the chair of Somalia's Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission.

More than 40 percent of Somali residents rely on remittances, which total an estimated \$1 billion annually. In April 2014, British banking giant Barclays and Africa's largest money-transfer operator for remittances, Dahabshiil Holdings Ltd, agreed to a deal that would temporarily keep Dahabshiil's account with Barclays open. The account, which Barclays had planned to close in 2013 due to concerns that transfers were being used for money laundering and terrorist funding, would have affected hundreds of millions of dollars in remittance payments to Somalia. In summer 2014, American bank Merchants announced its intention to close the accounts of remittance organizations following fears of the funds being diverted to the Shabaab or other illicit actors. Existing labor laws are not adequately enforced. The Shabaab, among many other violations, have reportedly recruited child soldiers.

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

Full Methodology

The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Somaliland, which is examined in a separate report.