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**Decision on Somalia**

## A global perspective

The civil war in Somalia is going on since 1988. For the first time violence is reduced, what may primarily be linked with UN SC Resolution 733 in January. The two main contenders in the country Aidid and Ali Madhi agreed on an implementation of cease-fire under UN supervision. Can the conflict be solved without further interference of the international community or is a peacekeeping mission necessary? Will the Security Council members, especially the P5 engage themselves further in Somalia?

The Security Council became very busy after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. In El Salvador there was ONUSAL established in May 1991 with a deployment of 1,500 under UN SC Resolution 693. In the same month UNAVEM II in Angola was created with a personnel over 10,000 in UN SC Resolution 696. In February 1992 UNTAC in Cambodia was established with UN SC Resolution 745, a 21,000 strong civilian and military peacekeeping force. As well in February 1992 UNPROFOR was created with a personnel of 39,000 under UN SC resolution 743. Several voices claim a certain fatigue in the halls of the UN headquarter in New York City.

It is unclear how motivated the P5 are and in which they want to act in the future in Somalia. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 the Russian Federation became an independent country, but it is still unclear how they will act under the new circumstances. The United States was in 1991 against an involvement of the Security Council in Somalia. In UN SC Resolution 746 the United States were against a peacekeeping force. Have they already changed their mind? OAU-leader and Nigerian Foreign Minister Ike Nwachukwu stated, "Africa must receive the same qualitative and quantitative attention paid to other regions". Because of the new partnership of the United States with the Gulf countries after the second Gulf war, the presence at the Horn of Africa diminished in importance. The only other country of the Security Council with a global claim of influence and on the situation in Somalia is France. France has a military base in Djibouti, where a Somali clan is the dominant ethnic group. It remains open how strong the French involvement will be.

With the accession of Boutros Boutros-Ghali as new Secretary General in beginning of January it seems clear that Africa will become more attention of his office. Already as Egyptian Foreign Minister he tried in March 1991 with his Italian colleague to work on peace talks, which eventually haven't taken place. Until now his personal commitment has shown that he tries to keep Somalia on the agenda and stabilize the country. Nevertheless the problem is remaining that for the first time in UN history there is no government to negotiate with and they have to trust Aidid and Ali Madhi.

## Timeline

**1959:** Somalia is given full independence from Italy.

**15/10/1969:** President Shermake was assassinated in a military coup d'etat and one week later, Major-General Mohammed Siad Barre, the Commander of the national forces, assumed absolute power. Barre established an all-military council known as the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) instead of the National Assembly.

**1970:** General Barre formally declared Somalia a „socialist state“.

**01/07/1976:** Barre dissolved the SRC and replaced it with the Somali Revolutionary Party (SRSP) as the sole political party in the country and the vanguard of the „people's revolution.“ On the whole Barre tried to replicate the Soviet model as he was backed by Moscow.

**1978:** Somalia was defeated by Ethiopia in the war about the Ogaden region. Somalia's military was ruined as well as the dream of a unified Greater Somalia was abandoned.

**1980s:** Siad Barre changed the sides and was from now on supported by the US. The economy was liberalized as Somalia was under pressure of the IMF, the UNDP and the Worldbank. Several state-orchestrated mass murdering of elites belonging to opposing clans of Siad Barre were murdered. His authoritarian regime showed more and more tendencies of an inherent anarchy.

**1981:** The Somali National Movement (SNM), a resistance movement, was formed to topple the Barre dictatorship by the strong Isaaq clan in the North.

**1988:** A military campaign of the SNM was launched and the captured Hargeisa and Berbera. Under heavy bombardments they had to withdraw, around 300,000 Isaaq fled to Ethiopia.

**1989:** Southern opposition groups came together under one politico-military umbrella, the United Somali Congress (USC) and became one of the rebelling factions.

**06/07/1989:** It was widely believed in Somalia that the government assassinated the critical Roman-Catholic bishop of Mogadishu Salvatore Colombo. In the aftermath slaughters of the Red Berets, a dreaded elite unit of Barre, took place against demonstrators, mainly from the Isaaq clan. The US started to distance itself from Mogadishu.

**1990:** Barre's dictatorship had crumbled, and he was deposed. Mohammed Farah Aidid became a prominent leader of the USC. Ali Madhi Mohammed was then proclaimed President of the Republic of Somalia by the USC, a claim recognized by very few inside the country.

The political and territorial gains of the opposition forces had severely weakened Barre's governmental and military apparatus. The last stronghold was the capital city, Mogadishu. Through a massive distribution of weapons and ammunition Siad Barre tried to outlive the conflict.

**06/07/1990:** An anti-Barre demonstration in the main stadium of Mogadishu slipped to a riot; at least 56 demonstrators were killed.

**13/07/1990:** Barre dropped the charge against 114 intellectuals, who required in a petition election and improved human rights, after demonstrators surrounded the court.

**November/December 1990:** Large areas of Mogadishu were destroyed between fighting of the two leading contenders for power, the Habre Gedir-Hawiye, lead by Aidid, and Abgal Hawiye, lead by Ali Madhi.

**26/01/1991:** Long-time dictator Siad Barre was forced to leave Mogadishu.

**May 1991:** The Isaaq clan announced its independence in the North with the not recognized state of Somaliland.

**June 1991:** Aidid was elected chairman of the USC by a two-thirds vote, but Ali Mahdi refused to step down as President.

**October 1991:** Ali Mahdi formed a government of eight ministers, and the Italian government promised massive financial support. Aidid's militia forces gained the upper hand, confining Mahdi's supporters to a portion of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Aidid then concentrated his efforts on violent factions in southern Somalia, which were largely responsible for the famine in that region.

**1991:** Conflict between the Somali National Movement (SNM), Aidid's party, and other factions caused clan infighting, leading to famine and lawlessness throughout portions of the country. An estimated 300,000 Somalis died of starvation and about one million people fled to Kenya or Ethiopia during the year of civil war that followed Barre's ouster.

**03/01/1992:** The Egyptian Coptic Christ Boutros Boutros-Ghali became the new UN Secretary-General. His first official act was in accordance with de Cuellar, the former UN Secretary-General, to appoint James O.C. Jonah from Sierra Leone to Mogadishu to negotiate with Madhi, Aidid and other Somalis about a cease-fire in the capital and the safety of humanitarian assistance. Without success Jonah had to return to Washington. Observers on the spot were reporting about a "debacle" of the Jonah team.

**23/01/1992:** UN-SC Resolution 733 passed and the Security Council was "*gravely alarmed at the rapid deterioration of the situation in Somalia and the heavy loss of human life and widespread material damage resulting from the conflict in the country and aware of its consequences of stability and peace in the region.*" Under chapter VII of the UN Charter was required "*a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia until the Council decides otherwise.*"

**31/01/1992:** The head of states of the Security Council members met in New York City and requested from Boutros-Ghali to work out a recommendation for preventive diplomacy.

**05/02/1992:** Brian Wannop, the UN's Special Coordinator for Somalia arrived in Mogadishu to formally extend the Security Council's invitation to Mahdi and Aidid to attend peace talks in New York City. It was

observed that Wannop's visit further inflamed inter-clan tensions in Somalia by unintentionally undermining the authority of traditional elders.

**14/02/1992:** The result of the meeting in New York City between the representatives of Ali Madhi and Aideed and the UN Secretary General was to stop animosities, to adjourn fighting in the capital and to accept an international delegation, which should work out and overview a cease-fire in Mogadishu.

**29/02/1992:** The deployment of 25 soldiers each in the two districts of Mogadishu beyond the "Green line", as well as an "adequate" number of security staff for the safety of relief was agreed on.

**03/03/1992:** The delegation of James Jonah reached in Mogadishu with Mahdi as well as Aidid an agreement to the implementation of the cease-fire under UN supervision.

**March 1992:** Mohamed Sahnoun traveled through Somalia in March in a nonofficial fact-finding mission, as Boutros-Ghali had invited him to do so. His personal courage was approved of both conflict sides.

**17/03/1992:** UN SC Resolution 746 accepted the agreement of 3 March 1992.

**20/03/1992:** The UN Secretary General appointed David Bassiouni as coordinator to oversee the delivery of the UN humanitarian assistance to the affected population in all parts of Somalia, in liaison with other international humanitarian organizations.

**23/03/1992:** The fighting lowered considerably in the capital and as a result of UN SC Resolution 746 Boutros-Ghali established a "technical team" in Mogadishu to work out a plan of the UN ceasefire supervision and the safety of humanitarian assistance.