European Union Training Mission Somalia

PRESS SUMMARY

14th September 2018

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US and Somalia forces come under attack during operation against Al Shabaab

A Somali soldier was killed and 2 others injured, US Africa Command said.

September 13, 2018 - U.S. and Somali forces came under attack during an operation against the al-Qaeda affiliated group al-Shabaab in central Somalia, U.S. Africa Command said.

A Somali soldier was killed and two others injured in the attack, which occurred on Wednesday, September 11 in the village of Mubaraak, approximately 37 miles west of the capital Mogadishu, Africom said on Thursday.

U.S. forces conducted an airstrike in response to the attack, killing two al-Shabaab fighters and injuring another. No U.S. personnel were killed or injured, the command said.

Al-Shabaab is fighting to overthrow the internationally backed government in Mogadishu, but has also carried out attacks in neighboring Kenya, which has deployed troops as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Africom works with AMISOM on both advise-and-assist missions as well as air support missions to target al-Shabaab’s forces, but has drawn controversy from strikes that have killed civilians.

US-assisted raid on Somali ex-leader's home blamed on bad intelligence

Thu 13 Sep 201 - US and Somali forces who raided the family home of a former president and detained three teenagers may have been acting on misleading intelligence, according to officials in the unstable east African country.

Somali soldiers accompanied by at least one foreigner broke into the house of Aden Abdullah Osman Daar, a revered nationalist leader and former president who died in 2007, in the town of Janale, around 100km south-west of Mogadishu late on Friday. Members of Daar’s family told the Guardian they were deeply shocked by the raid, which targeted Islamic militants from the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabaab organisation.

The incident will raise further concerns about the use of special forces troops to fight extremism in Africa. Last year the deaths of four American soldiers in an ambush in Niger prompted anger and led to questions over the costs of such deployments. Senior US officials are reported to be considering deep cuts to the special operations deployment on the continent. Three male members of the Daar family between the ages of 15 and 20 were arrested in the raid, the relatives said. The whereabouts of the detainees are currently unknown.

The troops also raided an adjacent farm belonging to Daar, who led Somalia from 1960 to 1967 and was the country’s first post-independence president. The office of Hassan Ali Khaire, the Somali prime minister, has apologised to the family.

One Somali intelligence officer with direct knowledge of the operation – which took place in a region known as an al-Shabaab stronghold – said “there was bad intelligence during and before the raid on the house of former president”. “The Americans did not know the place. They relied on false intelligence gathered by local informants who are sometimes biased due to clan influence,” he said.
However, a source in the prime minister’s office gave a different version of events. “The target of the raid was not the house of former President Aden Abdullah. This was an operation conducted by Somali special forces with their American advisers. The forces were following a member of terrorist group who ran away toward the house of the former president but the forces mistakenly raided the house where the family lived,” the source said.

The source also said Khaire told the family that the incident will be investigated and the three detained youths released soon. A second intelligence officer who worked with the American special forces said mistakes were often the fault of unreliable local informants. Majr Karl Weist, a spokesman for US Africa Command, said that American forces, in an advise and assist capacity, partnered in a Somali-led ground force operation to disrupt and degrade al-Shabaab operations in the vicinity of Wagaante, Somalia, on the night of 4 September 2018.

“The operation targeted al-Shabaab’s improvised explosive device network. US forces were in a supporting role only,” he said. Somali forces have been fighting Islamist militants from the al-Shabaab organisation for more than a decade. In recent years the US has increased its support for local troops, sending special forces to train Somali troops and accompany combat operations. The US has also conducted a growing number of airstrikes, including dozens by unmanned drones.

The incident highlights the difficulty of military operations in a complex political and social environment. Raiding the home of a prominent local family and detaining innocent individuals risks fuelling support for insurgents, experts say. There have been frequent claims that raids, sometimes involving US forces, have caused civilian casualties.

According to Dhaqan Osman, a family member, the joint forces were led by a tall white man who spoke American English. “They broke into the front gate and then broke the inside gate with huge iron bar. They had torch lights and small guns with them. They first entered the room where the boys slept. They arrested two boys – my son and his brother-in-law. They then entered the next room and detained the third boy,” she said. Suad Abdullahi, the sister of the two detained brothers, said: “We were chatting inside the house when we heard the breaking of the front gate. Suddenly the men came in. They had torch lights and they ordered
us all to lie down. We said we are women and we need to cover. But they said ‘no’. They caught and blindfolded our grandfather who is diabetic.” she said.

Witnesses said the westerner told the Somali soldiers to search the house. “The searched every corner of the house and they said, ‘where is al-Shabaab guy? Where is the emir of al-Shabaab?’ We were shocked to hear that. This is the house and the farm of the former President Aden Abdullah [Daar], who is well respected among the Somali people,” Abduallahi said.

“Even during the warlords era and the rule of the militant groups in this area, nobody dared to enter the house of the former president due to the respect for the family.” The joint forces left with the three boys on a waiting helicopter, the witnesses said.

Analysts say that the intensified operations have caused casualties among al-Shabaab leaders and have stopped dozens of bombings, potentially saving hundreds of lives.

But a series of offensives has failed to dislodge al-Shabaab from its strongholds.

Intelligence documents, transcripts of interrogations with recent defectors and interviews with inhabitants of areas in the swath of central and southern Somalia controlled by al-Shabaab have shone a light on the severity of its harsh rule – but also revealed significant support in some areas.

Unknown fighter jets carry out airstrikes in Middle Shabelle region

September 13, 2018

Unidentified war planes jets carried out airstrikes outside Jowhar town, the regional capital of Middle Shabelle region on Thursday.

According to reliable reports from the area, the target of the bombardment which took place in Ganboole and Jiriyaale, two Al-Shabaab strongholds remains unclear.

No country has so far commented on the recent airstrikes against Al-Shabaab Middle Jubba region carried out by fighter jets.

US warplanes have previously conducted airstrikes against senior Al-Shabaab fighters in Southern Somalia.

Most of US airstrikes carried out in Southern Somalia took place in Lower Shabelle and Jubba regions where it is believed that Al-Qaeda linked Al-Shabaab training bases.

Somali forces carry out massive sweep in capital after car bombings

September 13, 2018

Somali police launched an operation in Mogadishu, the Somali capital after two car bombs struck local government offices in the city, which claimed the lives of at least 20 people.

The security personnel were seen on main streets in the capital on Thursday morning, searching all public and private vehicles trying to prevent from attacks by Al-Shabaab.

The police commanders have not yet commented on the sweep, which comes amid a surge in Al-Shabaab attacks in the city, which houses the Western-backed Somali government.

Al-Shabaab has been driven out of Mogadishu in 2011 by Somali and AU troops following a joint offensive, but, the group still capable of staging raids and assassinations in the city.

Somalia: Kenyan forces kill civilins near border town

13th September 2018, MOGADISHU- Kenya’s anti-terrorism unit has allegedly shot and killed unarmed civilians near its border along Somalia. The Kenyan forces targeted a Koran school in Dabacity area near Somali border, killing two school children and a teacher over unknown reason, a source said. He says masked Kenya’s anti-terrorism unit opened fire on the school that killed two students and thier Koran teacher, whose name identified as Sadam Mo’alim Aweis. The children, who were killed in the Kenyan forces’ operation are reported to have been bothers, relatives said.

“We shocked when we heard our children were killed by Kenyan forces at Koran school”. “We are now prepering for thier burial”, relatives added.

This is a list of people’s names killed by Kenyan forces

1) A Koran teacher, Sadam Mo’alim Aweis, 2) A Koran student, Ali Ibrahim Hassan, 3) A Koran student, Siyad Ibrahim Hassan

The dead bodies were brought into hospital Elwak, a town close to Kenyan border along Somalia. The execution has reportedly sparked deadly riots in El-Qalow town on Thursday after dead bodies were brought in to hospital. Two ‘non-locals’ and a shopkeeper were killed in Thursday’s riots, aaccording to local residents, who spoke to the local media based in Somali capital Mogadishu. There was no comment from Kenya’s anti-terrorism mission in Nairobi over the latest allegations. Last year, United Nations report accused Kenyan forces of being responsible for 40 civilian deaths in Somalia during a 22-month period ending in mid-October. The latest report issued by UN said that air strikes carried out by the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) were “allegedly responsible for 42 civilian casualties in Somalia.

AU mission trains medical staff on life-saving skills in combat zones

Friday September 14, 2018

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) said Thursday it has ended a two-day course to equip military medical officers with life-saving skills in the battlefield.

Jim Beesigye Owoyesigire, AMISOM Force Commander who closed the training, challenged the 32 participants to orientate themselves with all types of casualties they are likely to encounter during the service in the Mission.

The training undertaken by medical personnel operating in combat zones, is part of the AMISOM's medical support plan aimed at ensuring that all its medical personnel are well versed in battlefield First Aid, casualty evacuations and care, handling drug stockpiles and disposal of medical waste.

The training jointly organized by the United Nations Support Mission in Somalia and AMISOM, was attended by 32 officers, among them nurses, clinical officers and pharmacists.

The participants are also expected to train their Somali counterparts to develop their capacity of handling life threatening injuries that occur in the battlefield.

Somali government details IGAD summit in Addis Ababa

September 13, 2018

IGAD heads of state held their 33rd session in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia on Wednesday to discuss the current situation in the region, mainly the political crisis.

Somalia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Ismail Awale, said after the meeting that the IGAD leaders discussed the solution to the crisis in South Sudan.

Meanwhile, the Minister added that the leaders of the conference highly praised Somalia for its reforms in the fields of economics and politics, and also expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the international community to address the challenges of the Horn of Africa.

The Somali government plays a crucial role in peacebuilding, promoting economic cooperation and social inclusion in the Horn of Africa.

South West Legislators Oppose Suspension Of Ties With Farmaajo

12 September 2018

Several legislators from the Southwest state have opposed the decision arrived at by the Southwest regional state's Cabinet to cut off working relations with President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo's administration. Speaking at a press conference in the interim capital of Baidoa.

The MPs termed the move illegal since it violates sections of the Constitutions that legitimize a federal system of government. Claiming the decision was a personal stand of the Southwest regional President, the legislators argued such a weighty decision cannot be undertaken without endorsement of the regional state assembly. The latest move follows a decision by the Southwest state Cabinet endorsing a decision by regional leaders at a recent conference in Kismayo to suspend working relations with the Federal Government.

Somalia’s destiny lies in the hands of the people, highlights outgoing UN envoy

13 September 2018 - .

Briefing the Security Council for the last time in his capacity as UN Special Representative for Somalia, Michael Keating called on all Somalis to draw strength from the positive transformations going on inside the country and work collectively for the common good.

“The future of Somalia is in the hands of the Somalis,” he declared.

In particular, Mr. Keating – who also heads the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) – urged unity among political leaders. “The more [they] show unity, the greater the opportunity, and the responsibility, of international partners to invest in all parts of the country and its leadership,” he said.

In his remarks, Mr. Keating highlighted four key concerns the country’s leaders need to address, and issues that the international community should keep focusing on. These include the threat posed by the Al Shabaab and other extremist groups; the risk of political differences overshadowing progress in legislative, reform and security areas; fragmentation within the international community; and the danger of a humanitarian “catastrophe”, especially with most of the population already living in precarious circumstances due to climate change and other vulnerabilities.

“Future crises will result from the combination of climate related shocks; armed conflict provoked by Al Shabaab and unresolved grievances; competition over natural resources; and systemic marginalization of certain groups,” warned Mr. Keating. He underscored the need to reduce the vulnerability faced by ordinary Somalis, through job creation and smart
investments that safeguard natural resources and help unlock the enormous economic potential of the country.

Besides political will, Mr. Keating underscored, success will depend on leaders from the political, business and traditional spheres “working together for the common good, leveraging the country’s potential wealth to transform prospects for people – especially the young.” On 1 October, Nicholas Haysom will replace Mr. Keating as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and the head of UNSOM. Mr. Keating was appointed the top UN official in the Horn of Africa nation in November 2015.

Women have brought ‘important voices’ to Somali politics - Alongside Mr. Keating, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of the UN gender equality and empowerment agency for women and girls (UN Women) highlighted the “once-in-a-generation opportunity” that Somalia currently has to establish lasting peace, and gender equality. She commended the nation for improving representation of women in public office, illustrated by the “jump” in women’s representation in parliamentary elections from 14 to nearly 25 per cent of seats in the most recent elections. This progress, she underscored, has brought many “important voices” to Somali politics.

She said it had brought to the centre “the fight to end child marriage, end female genital mutilation (FGM), and change laws that discriminate against women,” noting that the participation of women will be further boosted if more leaders, especially clan leaders, embrace gender equality and support women. She also called on the international community and the Security Council to support Somalia’s federal and provincial authorities, advance gender equality, act strongly against sexual and gender-based violence, advocate for meaningful participation and recognition of women in all sectors, and support women’s groups in the country. “Women’s organizations in Somalia are organized. They are dedicated to their country: they are activists, advocates, entrepreneurs, professionals, and patriots,” said Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, noting that as the country prepares to confront the challenges in the days ahead, “women will make the difference.”

Speech: Advancing Peace and Stability in Somalia

September 14, 2018 - Thank you Madam President and may I thank all three of our briefers for their very informative briefings today. But if I may, can I particularly thank Michael Keating for his work and commitment during this historic period in Somalia’s state-building process, for his resilience whilst holding this challenging and dynamic portfolio. Michael, you have been an exemplary SRSG and I think the whole Council wishes you well in your future.

As Michael set out in the nearly three years he’s represented the Secretary-General, there’s been real progress to advance peace, stability and state-building in Somalia. But there have also been and remain significant challenges, and we have seen both in recent months. I think the biggest single positive, if we start with the positives, must surely be in the overall regional dynamic. It has been exciting, it has been inspirational to see the rapprochement brought about in the Horn of Africa in particular led by Ethiopia and Eritrea. And I want to take the opportunity to welcome to the Council the new Ambassador of Ethiopia, you’re very welcome here sir. And to pay tribute, if I may, also to your predecessor who was such an influential member of this Council. I’ve known him for a decade. I learnt so much from him, and I count him as a friend. So I just want to welcome you and thank your predecessor for all he did for us here and for Africa in this Council.

In Somalia, I think the other positives we’ve seen are the agreement in principle on an electoral model and on resource sharing signed in June, and we welcome and need to see further progress to take these forward. And it’s been extremely encouraging to see the strong progress on economic recovery, including efforts to tackle corruption, improve public financial management and commitments to ambitious reforms under the recently agreed third IMF program. We commend these efforts and their results and I agree very much with Michael on the economic potential of Somalia, which requires of course political commitment and courage if we’re to get there. We also warmly welcome the much needed improvement in the humanitarian situation following both the strong humanitarian response and the better than average rainfall. Recovery remains fragile. We must not be complacent and the situation is still concerning with 2.6 million internally displaced persons in urgent need of assistance.

Madam President, unfortunately though, as our briefers set out, significant challenges...
remain. The current political difficulties between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States urgently needs to be resolved. This is critical across all areas of state-building. A failure to resolve this challenge would seriously limit the opportunity for further progress. Co-operation between the parties is needed to meet the December timeframe for passing an electoral law, in particular to agree the final outstanding issue of constituency size; it is needed to complete the constitutional review process and to strengthen the federal system, and it is needed to take forward the vital work of Security reform so we must have cooperation.

Now onto security. Let me start by condemning in the strongest terms the attacks in Mogadishu on the 2nd and 10th of September and sending my deepest condolences to all those affected. Security reform is at a critical juncture. Implementation of the national security architecture, including integration of and support for regional forces, is vital, and faster progress is needed. The national security architecture is the critical underpinning of a successful transition to Somalia-led security. So we welcome the development of a transition plan and we pay tribute to the ongoing commitment and sacrifices of AMISOM and the troop-contributing countries in the fight against Al-Shabab, and that was made very clear I thought by Franscisco in his briefing. It is important that the transition plan is delivered in a managed and coordinated way with close engagement from AMISOM, the Federal Member States and other partners. Support the practical requirements of transition AMISOM needs to reconfigure accordingly. And we all as international partners must play our part, and that’s by coordinating the assistance we give as part of a comprehensive approach to security structures. And Michael again set out the importance of us coordinating together and ensuring we don’t end up in a situation where essentially we are accidentally funding a set of different and private armies. We must bring together one army. We must ensure the transition is sustainably financed. The United Kingdom announced in recent weeks an additional $9 million in funding for AMISOM. I expect there will be a number of calls today around this table for predictable, sustainable funding for AMISOM, and I urge all those who make those calls to ensure that they also make similar contributions.

Madam President may I welcome here to the Security Council table and I hope to see even more often Mrs. Mlambo-Ngcuka and I would just like to welcome very much her briefing. The rise to 73 female MPs elected to Parliament in 2016 was a significant change and really worthy of commendation. The country must build on this to support and strengthen the role of women as decision-makers and in leadership roles by strengthening
the position of women, along with young people, people with disabilities, displaced people, and minority groups in the upcoming electoral law and constitutional review, I agree wholeheartedly with Phumzile that sustainable development and sustainable peace requires inclusion. And inclusion requires the inclusion particularly of women. Legislation is important to strengthen the protection for women and girls and ensure perpetrators of abuses are held to account, including for sexual and gender-based violence, and we look forward to further progress on the sexual offences bill and commend the progress made in Somaliland. Madam President, overall, we believe that we are on the right side of the ledger in Somalia but we cannot be complacent. We must continue to work and we must work harder. I hope the remarkable and exciting progress in the Horn of Africa also has an impact in Somalia. The key is dialogue and cooperation. All Somali leaders must work together and find ways to set aside short-term interest and gain in favor of longer term stability which will be a far higher political security and economic benefit to all in Somalia. That is the only way also to ensure the continuing international support. Thank you Madam President.

Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia to launch joint polio vaccination in Garissa

Sep. 13, 2018 - Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia Health ministers are expected to launch a point polio vaccination campaign for the Horn of Africa in Garissa town on Friday. They will be hosted by Kenya’s Health CS Sicily Kariuki and the county government of Garissa. In a press statement on Thursday, the CS said the Global Polio Eradication Initiative recommended two rounds of synchronised polio vaccination campaigns to be conducted in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. She said this was due to the recent isolation of more circulating vaccine-derived polio viruses in Somalia, and particularly in areas close to Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia border. "The first round of the campaigns in Kenya will be conducted from September 15 to 19 and subsequent round in October." Kariuki said the campaign targets 827,089 children below five years of age. The two planned rounds in Kenya will target 12 high-risk counties that participated in the July and August immunisation drive. They include Nairobi, Wajir, Garissa, Mandera, Lamu, Tana River, Meru, Kitui, Machakos, Isiolo, Kiambu, and Kajiado counties. Somalia and Ethiopia will also be conducting their campaigns within the same period. "The Ministry would like to assure the public that the polio vaccines are the usual vaccines used for routine vaccination in our health facilities," the CS said. Kairuki added that the vaccines have undergone rigorous safety procedures during the manufacturing processes. "In addition, the Ministry, together with the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishop’s medical personnel and Vaccine testing expert committee, have undertaken further testing of the vaccines at National Quality Control Laboratory in Nairobi and the test confirmed the safety of the vaccines," the CS added. She said the Health ministry is committed to implementing preventive health interventions and response measures as guided by national policies and in line with international requirements as provided for in International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005. The Cabinet Secretary appealed to all Kenyans in the respective target counties to make their children available for the polio vaccine to help kick polio out of Kenya by the year 2020. "If we achieve this, then our goal of universal health coverage will be a reality," she concluded.

World Bank says Somali economy to grow by 3-4 pct

13 September 2018 - The Somali economy is projected to grow at an annual rate of between 3 and 4 percent, the World Bank said in a report released on Thursday, according to Xinhua.

According to the World Bank's third Somalia Economic Update (SEU), the country’s economy grew by an estimated 2.3 percent in 2017, down from 4.4 percent in 2016, reflecting the impact of enormous losses seen in livestock and crop production and exports. The report said the volume of live animal exports, Somalia's largest export, accounting for more than 70 percent of export earnings, declined by 75 percent, from 5.3 million animals in 2015 to 1.3 million in 2017.

John Randa, senior economist at the World Bank Macroeconomic, Trade and Investment Global Practice and lead author of the SEU, said Mogadishu needs to continue to build the fiscal buffers to allow greater public investment in basic services. "To achieve higher growth, Somalia requires an acceleration of structural reforms. Recent efforts to broaden the tax base, enhance compliance, and reduce wasteful expenditures are starting to pay off," Randa said. The report said the Somali economy has grown modestly in recent years, and it remains vulnerable to recurrent shocks. According to the report, Somalia has one of the most active mobile money markets in the world, outpacing most other countries in Africa despite its fragility and underdeveloped financial institutions.

About 155 million transactions, worth 2.7 billion dollars, are recorded per month, the report said.

https://en.trend.az/world/other/2951391.html
Somalia's return to COMESA: More harm than good

14.09.2018 - The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is a free trade zone with 21 member states, extending from Tunisia to Swaziland. COMESA was formed in 1994, replacing a preferential trade bloc that had existed since 1981. COMESA's member states include Burundi, the Comoros Islands, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. COMESA is Africa's largest economic community with a total population of more than 454 million and an estimated GDP of about $496 billion. The mission of COMESA is to eliminate all barriers of trade between member states, apply the same customs duties to countries outside the bloc, and also promote free labor movement within member states. In June 2018 the membership applications of Tunisia and Somalia were accepted after a long pursuance. The fact is that some countries benefit from being in such blocs while others lose. Some countries are industrialized and competitive in such markets while others, such as Somalia, with a weak and fragile economy, will eventually suffer.

Here are the reasons why Somalia's return to COMESA was a bad decision at this time of political and economic turmoil in the country: First is the inadequate local production by weak and noncompetitive domestic producers. After the public economic system of Somalia had collapsed, a small number of businesses survived, resisted and were retained in the country while other private businesses were newly established. Those companies are the only sources of employment in Somalia, and provide employment to the majority of the working population in the country. Instead of protecting such domestic companies from foreign competition, the government of Somalia decided to put those vital domestic companies in danger with its return to COMESA. International competition is good sometimes as it can increase the efficiency and the productivity of domestic companies. But that is when the domestic businesses are strong enough to compete with foreign companies. Also, this can be achieved when the government is providing the required services and subsidies to domestic companies, to motivate and help them become competitive, at least at the local market level.
Tunisia and Somalia were granted membership on the same day. Comparing the two countries and why they worked very hard for their membership we see that Tunisia is a country with natural resources including oil and gas and is looking for markets to sell to. That is why they were striving to find themselves in this free trade bloc that allows them to export its oil to all member states in the bloc without any tariffs or encountering any other barriers.

The question is this: what is Somalia going to put on the table to benefit economically from the bloc? Livestock exports? Of course, the answer is no. Despite Somalia's GDP's sole dependence on agriculture and livestock, Somalia relies on more imported food than domestically produced.

The second fact is that it will fuel the import of khat, a flower plant particularly grown in the horn of Africa. The foreign aid from international donors and remittances from Somali migrant workers abroad are the two major ways in which Somalia gets hard currency, a part of which was used to somewhat revive Somalia's economy. Otherwise, the economy would have completely collapsed long ago. Unfortunately, a large portion of that money goes to Kenya and Ethiopia in cash for khat, a drug which is widely used in Somalia. Instead, this money that is exchanged for khat could have been invested in the country, created jobs and contributed to the growth and development of the country.

Today, although it is not as it was required, a small number of tariffs exist on khat. But, still, it is revenue generated by the government. So, imagine if khat is exempted from taxable commodities. Instead of that, it is better for Somalis to totally stop and reject the decision of the government to rejoin COMESA. Otherwise, the number of khat addicts will double, too much money will be lost and ultimately the already suffering economy of Somalia will be very hard to revive again. Kenya, the biggest khat exporter, is already in the bloc and ready to dump khat in Somalia, which is trying to take advantage of the bloc, as there are no barriers to trade.

Thirdly, it is the brain drain and increased unemployment. Amazingly, most of the Somalis are optimistic and positive about the issue saying the bloc will allow them to move freely to other member states such as Kenya and Uganda where a large number of Somali businessmen are operating. So, Somalis will be allowed entry into those countries, invest in their economies and establish businesses there without visas or any other entry
requirements. But they don't think beyond that and the possible negative consequences it may have in the future.

Yes, the bloc encourages the free movement of goods and people but the matter is not as easy as it appears to many Somalis. In this case, those economically and politically stable countries will have the advantage of attracting as much skilled labor and entrepreneurs as they can, to promote their growth and job creation in their local economies. On the contrary, countries like Somalia, where there are political uncertainties, insecurity and a very fragile economy will not be in the position to capitalize on this free trade treaty.

The private sector

After the public sector of the economy had collapsed, the private sector remained as the only sector in the country for decades and has absorbed a massive number of the working population. Despite insecurity and harsh challenges, the private sector has been resilient and continues to create jobs for the youth which represents 75 percent of the whole population of Somalia. The fact is that private businesses in Somalia are serving in harsh and challenging conditions of insecurity, lack of supporting infrastructure such as roads and so on. So, as soon as they are allowed the right to establish businesses in neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, they will certainly choose to do so and move to those countries where they can get stability and other support facilities and services.

By the way, it is good for Somali private businesses to work in a stable environment and serve the people who have a higher purchasing power than back home. But, we have to keep in mind that those private businesses employ a large number of Somalis. As they leave home, unemployment will increase drastically. At the same time, skilled labor will also leave home; current and upcoming Somali entrepreneurs will do the same and in that way, the brain drain will be inevitable in this dear country, which has been suffering for decades from poverty and hunger. What Somalia needs is to recover from hunger, insecurity and its economy to be revived as well, not to initiate reckless policies that might do more harm than good.

Two sisters die after undergoing FGM in Somalia, campaigner says

Thu September 13, 2018 - Two sisters have died in Somalia from complications that arose after undergoing female genital mutilation, according to Hawa Aden Mohamed, who campaigns against the procedure.

Ten-year-old Aasiyo Abdi Warsame and her sister, Khadijo, 11, died a day after they were subjected to the procedure in the remote village of Arawda in Puntland State on September 11, said Aden Mohamed, director of the Somalia's women's rights group Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development. According to Aden Mohammed, the sisters were cut the same day by a local circumciser. They continued bleeding 24 hours after the procedure, and died while their mother was taking them to a health center, Aden Mohamed said.

"Unfortunately, they never made it to the hospital as they all died on the way," said Aden Mohamed, who has been calling for legislation banning the practice commonly done on young girls in Somalia. The sisters' death comes two months after Somalia's government vowed to pursue a landmark prosecution in the case of a 10-year-old girl who died after female genital mutilation, a practice that is legal in the country.

Deeqa Dahir Nuur died two days after she was subjected to one of the most extreme forms of female genital mutilation, according to doctors who tried to save her after she suffered complications from the procedure performed by a local cutter in another village in Somalia on July 17. Aden Mohamed, a survivor of the procedure, said young girls continue to bear the consequences of the practice because of the government's reluctance to pass anti-female genital mutilation laws. "It is another sad story coming even before the dust settles and action is taken in the Deeqa case. Yet there seems to be reluctance in discussing and passing the anti-FGM law," she said.
"We hope that this will serve as a wake-up call for those responsible to see the need to have the law in place to protect girls from this heinous practice," Aden Mohamed added. In Somalia, 98% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have been cut, the highest rate in the world, according to United Nations statistics. The report said around 200 million girls and women in the world are affected by the practice.

Female genital mutilation involves the altering or removing of the female genitals, such as the clitoris or labia. The procedure can cause severe bleeding and health issues including infections and infertility, as well as complications in childbirth.

The practice is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, but remains widespread in Somalia, where more than half the female population believe it should not be abolished.

Fears Of Further Flooding Haunt Householders Along River Shabelle In Beletweyne

12 September 2018 The rising level of the River Shabelle is causing high anxiety among people living along the river in the southern Somalia town of Beletweyne, where flooding earlier this year caused major destruction and displacement. Nurto Hassan Ahmed, a mother of six living in Hawo Tako on the outskirts of town, told Radio Ergo she had packed up her belongings ready to get out of the house quickly if the river starts to overflow its banks. In April, she had to move suddenly with her children when the rising river took them all unawares. “I nearly lost my children in the previous floods,” said Nurto, recalling the nightmare. “The water came in to the house at night while we were sleeping.” People living in the densely populated areas of Hawo Tako, Hawl wadaag, Kooshin, and Buundoweyn, who all suffered in April, are very likely to suffer another disaster, according to experts. Professor Muse Sha’iye, an advisor to Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM), told Radio Ergo that the erosion of the rivers banks in these areas in Beletweyne pose a serious risk of flooding in the surrounding villages. Recent heavy rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands has brought large flows of water down river. Excessive amounts of silt and sediment have piled up along the river bed, reducing the amount of water the river can hold and exacerbating the risk of further flooding. Professor Sha’iye identified 124 weak spots along the river banks that may break if there is water levels rise further. Fifty places along the river in Hiraan and Middle Shebelle regions were broken during the last flooding. For Nurto and other householders like her, meanwhile, there is nothing they can do but keep a wary eye on the river day and night. That is what she is doing, as well as her neighbours. There is no other more formal system to alert them to the need to move. Thousands of people were left homeless after the floods in April, and large tracts of farmland were inundated with crops washed away. Most of the displaced began returning to their homes to try to rebuild in July. The social welfare representative in Hiran region, Hussein Osman Ali, told Radio Ergo that the local authority does not have the resources to work on reconstructing the broken river banks.