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By Ken Menkhaus January 2012



enough

The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

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In this Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2011 file photo, two Kenyan army soldiers shield themselves from the downdraft of a Kenyan air force helicopter as it flies away from their base near the seaside town of Bur Garbo, Somalia.

Introduction

If the first decade of the new millennium bears a single enduring political lesson, it is this: Intervention strategies that plan the war but not the peace will fail. Indifference to or wishful thinking about the crafting of a post-intervention political order guarantees disorder, and can leave both the occupied country and the intervening power worse off than before.

Kenya risks this fate in southern Somalia, where its armed forces are currently engaged in an operation against the jihadi group al-Shabaab in the Jubbaland border region. Almost three months into the offensive, which has at times been bogged down in a combination of rainy season mud and political indecision, there is still little indication that Kenya or anyone else has a viable plan for who will govern this highly unstable and contested region if and when Shabaab is ousted. Unless this question is clearly and effectively addressed Kenya is not likely to get what it wants—a more stable and secure border area. Instead, its offensive could produce destabilizing clan clashes over the seaport of Kismayo. Aggrieved clans and communities could turn to Shabaab, reinvigorating a jihadi group in crisis. And the consequences of this combination of developments are likely to spill over into Kenya, affecting both the troubled border area and the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The stakes are exceptionally high for Kenya, which has much to lose if this operation fails.

For Kenya the immediate and essential goal is the establishment of a more friendly Somali political order in the remote pastoral areas along Kenyan-Somali border. This is the only objective Kenya's openly divided government appears to agree on. For the United States and other countries—including Kenya—ousting Shabaab from the seaport of Kismayo would be an optimal counterterrorism outcome as well, though at times over the past two months some Kenyan officials have expressed ambivalence about this goal, while some U.S. officials entertained doubts about the Kenyan offensive from the outset.¹ But for most Somalis the pivotal issue will be not so much driving Shabaab out as which groups will subsequently gain control of Kismayo whenever and

however Kismayo falls to an anti-Shabaab force. This is the danger, as Kismayo has been a chronically contested city since 1991.

Past approaches to determining who rules Kismayo—either via a victor’s peace by one group or the cobbling together of an unstable, clan-based coalition controlling the city—have consistently failed. A post-Shabaab Kismayo political order will require “realistic visionaries” who can forge a more cosmopolitan future for the coveted seaport, one in which the rights of all Somalis—not just the most powerful local clans—to live, own property, and pursue livelihoods is clearly spelled out.

This paper highlights the urgent need to initiate Somali dialogue toward a “Kismayo solution” before the city changes hands, and argues that a successful Somali dialogue on rights and claims on Kismayo could serve as a model for other contested Somali urban areas.

Backdrop to the incursion

Kenya has long suffered from spillover as a result of Somalia’s 20-year crisis. Armed conflict and lawlessness from Somalia have at times destabilized Kenya’s Somali-inhabited northeast province and placed much of it beyond the effective control of Kenyan authorities. The Somali neighborhood of Eastleigh in Nairobi in particular is a booming commercial center that is largely beyond the control of Kenyan authorities. It has served as a center of Shabaab recruitment and fund-raising.

Though for most of the past decade it has been considered one of the more stable regions of Kenya—thanks to impressive local-level civic governance efforts—the northeast of Kenya has over the past year seen a worrisome deterioration in security, manifested especially in a spike in assassinations that in some cases appear to be linked to Shabaab. Smuggling of consumer goods across the poorly patrolled border is endemic and has undercut legitimate Kenyan businesses and deprived Kenya of customs revenue, while smuggling of people, small arms, and drugs has been a significant source of destabilization and has reinforced criminal networks and cartels that thrive in this corner of Africa. In addition, Somali piracy has raised shipping costs for Kenya.

To make matters worse enormous flows of Somali refugees have fled into Kenya, placing considerable strain on the country. Some 480,000 refugees are packed into the refugee camps at Dadaab, near the Kenyan-Somali border, and hundreds of thousands of Somalis have relocated to Kenya’s main cities, often illegally.

Uncounted numbers of Somalis—including some Shabaab members—have taken advantage of corruption in Kenya to secure Kenyan ID cards, a practice accelerated by a desire on the part of Somali-Kenyan clans to inflate their numbers to increase both

the government revenues allocated to each county and their voting power in advance of the 2012 elections.²

Islamic radicalization in Somalia, fueled especially by the Ethiopian military occupation of southern Somalia in 2007 through 2008, has had a contagion effect in portions of Kenya's large and marginalized Muslim population as well.

Most recently, a spate of cross-border kidnappings by Somalis of Western tourists and aid workers has devastated tourism along Kenya's northern coast. The kidnappings were the pretext for Kenya's offensive against Shabaab, but the plans for a Kenya-backed military operation in the border area have been in place for some time.³

For years Kenya was surprisingly passive in the face of spillover from Somalia's decades-long disorder. Unlike Ethiopia, which shares a long border with Somalia and has a substantial Somali population, Kenya did not try to shape Somali political developments to advance its interests, sponsor local militia along the border to create a buffer zone, or engage in cross-border military operations against armed groups.

But as the costs of the Somali crisis mounted for Kenya, the Kenyan government became more pro-active. From 2002 to 2004 Kenya sponsored a lengthy Somali peace process that culminated in the creation of the Transitional Federal Government, or TFG. Kenya subsequently became a strong diplomatic supporter of the TFG, which earned it Shabaab's wrath. Shabaab occasionally issued threats against Kenya starting in 2007, but with the exception of a few minor incidents, it did not act until late 2010. The prevailing wisdom has been that Shabaab did not want to risk provoking a Kenyan law enforcement crackdown on the large Somali community inside Kenya, a move that could jeopardize millions of dollars of Somali investments and deprive Somalis—including Shabaab sympathizers—of an invaluable site for residency, refuge, transit, and business.

Over the past year Kenya's Somalia policy has taken a new, more assertive and interventionist turn. In late 2010 Kenya permitted an Ethiopian military incursion against Shabaab through Kenyan territory into the border town of Bulo Hawa, a move that many Somali Kenyans claimed led to subsequent instability and an increase in Shabaab violence in northern Kenya.

Faced with disappointing performance by the TFG and Shabaab's consolidation of control of the Jubbaland border regions, Kenya has also sought to engineer the creation of a friendlier buffer zone along its borders. In doing this, Kenya is taking a page from Ethiopia's "containment" policy on Somalia, in which the latter has sought to cultivate and maintain local Somali allies along its long border with Somalia. In carrying out this policy, however, Kenya has made the situation more complex by seeking alliances with a disparate set of Somali actors who see one another as rivals.

One reason for this policy confusion is that different branches of the Kenyan government have promoted different local allies. The result is that Kenya's local partners and proxies have at times been an unmanageable mix of groups, which, under the wrong conditions, are as likely to fight one another as they are to take on Shabaab.

Recently the Kenyan government has succeeded in encouraging some of these Somali rivals to work together in the “Joint Task Force” operating with Kenyan forces in the Jubba regions. For example, the most powerful Somali armed group allied with Kenya, the Ras Kamboni militia, was until recently an Ogaden clan militia, but it reportedly has integrated fighters from a number of other clans, including the Marehan.

Time will tell if this alliance will hold. If history is any guide, the odds are not good. Over the course of 2011 Kenya attempted to work with at least six Somali allies—Ras Kamboni; the TFG; the self-declared “Azania” regional administration; the Isiolo militia (now referred to as “TFG forces”); the al-Sunna Wal Jamma, or ASWJ, militia; and various Gedo region clan militias. This makes the prospect of crafting a regional buffer state challenging, and the prospect of crafting a deal on Kismayo potentially explosive.

Clan contestation in the Jubba regions

Since the civil war broke out in Somalia in 1988, many parts of the country have been zones of deep contestation by clans over rangeland, farmland, towns, and cities.⁴ The Jubba regions of southern Somalia bordering Kenya—Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, and Gedo regions—are no exception. Debates have raged and wars waged for two decades over the question of who has the right to claim Kismayo, other valuable towns, and irrigable farmland along the Jubba River. Each clan has its own claims based on their own interpretation of historical patterns of settlement, demographics, power, and citizenship rights in a country that has never resolved the fundamental question of who has the right to live where. Political and militia elites hoping to enrich themselves through control of key real estate in the Jubba regions have mobilized and manipulated clanism in the region.

At the epicenter of this battle is control of the valuable seaport of Kismayo. Whoever controls Kismayo enjoys the custom revenues from charcoal exports and commercial imports—especially sugar—smuggled across the Kenyan border via Dadaab and Garissa.⁵ The clans that control Kismayo also enjoy the largest and most livable urban setting in the Jubba regions. And because Kismayo is widely understood to be the “capital” of Jubbaland,⁶ the group that controls Kismayo can claim to be the governing authority of Jubbaland, even though none has been able to make good on this claim.⁷

Though the large Darood clan-family dominates the west bank, or TransJubba, area between the Jubba and Tana River valleys, many other clans and social groups—the

Digil-Mirifle, Sheekal, Dabarre, Bantu, Bajuni, Dir, Gaaljaal, Awrmale, and more recently the Haber Gedir, to name a few—constitute a large portion of the total population.

Any social group that believes it has been accorded an unfair slice of Kismayo's port revenues becomes a natural source of recruitment into armed opposition in this case, al-Shabaab. This point is critical, because it suggests that mishandling the process of determining how Kismayo will be controlled could have the unintended effect of strengthening Shabaab at a time when it is widely believed to be in serious trouble. Shabaab has already put this tactic of exploiting grievances of weaker clans to good use in its recruitment and alliances since 2008.

Challenges of the intervention

Most initial reactions to the Kenyan offensive have focused on the substantial problems and risks of the incursion from a military and security perspective. Some of the chief concerns include the following:

Kenya's military capacity to wage war. Kenya's military has very limited experience in direct combat, and, with the exception of some peacekeeping deployments, has never waged war across the Kenyan border. Some analysts worry that Kenya's untested forces will fare poorly in clashes with Somali forces on Somali terrain. Related to this concern are worries that Kenya initiated this attack in the early weeks of the dheere rainy season, when track roads become impassable and heavy military equipment gets bogged down. This is one of the reasons Kenyan forces moved so slowly in the first two months of the campaign. This gave many observers the impression that the Kenyan offensive was not adequately planned.

Unclear objectives. Kenyan officials have expressed divergent goals. They have at different points claimed the aim is to prevent Shabaab from engaging in cross-border abductions of tourists, defeat Shabaab, capture the strategic seaport of Kismayo, and to secure the border area.

Shabaab terrorist reprisal attacks in Kenya. Kenya is exceptionally vulnerable to Shabaab terrorist attacks. Shabaab moves freely in and out of Kenya, where the group does business, recruits, and engages in fundraising. A major Shabaab terrorist attack in Kenya would have devastating consequences for Kenyan tourism and business. Observers have expressed alarm that Shabaab could make good on threats to take the war to Kenya, and that Kenya would be less secure as a result of its offensive into Somalia. As evidence of this, foreign embassies have elevated security alerts for Kenya. Two grenade attacks in Nairobi, carried out by a professed Kenyan Shabaab member and recent convert to Islam, have amplified these fears. Shabaab leaders have implored their followers in Kenya to launch jihadi attacks in Kenya, a tactic that could produce "lone wolf" terrorism in addition to planned Shabaab attacks. The actual threat may be

overstated, however, as Kenya's value to Somali interests makes it risky for Shabaab to launch a major terrorist attack there. But the danger could grow larger the longer Kenyan forces stay inside Somalia.

Kenyan offensive as tool for Shabaab recruitment. Observers have raised concerns that Kenya's military operation into Somali territory could work to Shabaab's advantage, by rallying Somalis against a foreign occupation, in much the same way that Shabaab enjoyed significant popular support when Ethiopia occupied Mogadishu in 2007 and 2008. Though Somalis are exhausted from war and are devoting most of their resources to assisting relatives affected by the famine, a sustained Kenyan military presence, with inevitable reports of civilian casualties, runs the risk of generating a new wave of Somali jihadi recruits and fund-raisers for Shabaab. The ill-advised public announcement of Israeli counterterrorism support to Kenya was exactly the kind of misstep that Shabaab could parlay into propaganda to turn the Jubbaland intervention into a jihadi cause.⁸ So far few Somalis and Somali Kenyans appear to have joined Shabaab in response to either the Kenyan or Ethiopian military offensives in southern Somalia; Shabaab appears instead to be relying more and more on forced conscription.

Prospects of quagmire in Kismayo. Questions have been raised about how Kenyan forces will fare if and when they take the city of Kismayo. In a crowded urban setting, Kenya's military will lose some of the advantage it enjoys from its armored vehicles and heavy weapons, and will be more vulnerable to urban guerilla warfare and the use of roadside bombs. It could become bogged down in counterinsurgency warfare that Ethiopian forces and now African Union peacekeepers, or AMISOM, have faced in Mogadishu since 2007. There is reason to hope that local populations are so furious with Shabaab policies—especially forced recruitment and heavy taxation—that they will turn on Shabaab and prevent it from waging insurgency attacks in the town. But most communities in Somalia today are so fearful of reprisals that they are more likely to lay low and do nothing.

Complications of "rehatting" to an AMISOM force. In December, Kenya succeeded in gaining African Union approval to have its forces in Somalia "rehatting" as AMISOM peacekeepers, a decision still pending before the U.N. Security Council. This highly unusual move was driven mainly by Kenyan hopes to have the expensive operation underwritten by wealthy nations, and to give the offensive greater legitimacy. Questions have been raised about how or whether the rehatting would restrict Kenyan military operations, as it would have to abide by the much more narrow peacekeeping mandate of the AMISOM mission. Kenya is seeking a broadening of the mandate; but even if it does not succeed, it will likely be able to finesse an interpretation of the current mandate to continue its operations against Shabaab.

U.S. ambivalence. The Obama administration has been divided over the wisdom of the Kenyan offensive and as a result has not to date provided the kind of intelligence and other support that could improve the odds of its success.

Post-conflict challenges

These immediate security concerns are urgent and deserve full attention. But of equal long-term importance is the question of the political dispensation in Jubbaland if and when Shabaab is ousted from the region. What is the best approach to this very complex political problem?

The first step in forging a post-Shabaab administration is to disaggregate the Jubbaland political question into three separate objectives that Kenya could pursue: (1) the creation or fostering of non-threatening Somali polities along Kenya's border as a temporary buffer zone; (2) the establishment of a regional political unit; and (3) the brokering of a sustainable and equitable deal to govern the seaport of Kismayo. All three are important, for distinct reasons, but they require three different approaches. Breaking them up into three discrete tasks greatly improves the odds of the success of the Kenyan intervention.

Buffer zone on Kenya's border. This is the most achievable objective. The good news is that local communities along the Somali-Kenyan border already have extensive, routinized patterns of cooperation, thanks to years of efforts by Somali Kenyans backed by the Kenyan government. While there are many flashpoints for conflict in the area—over control of trade routes, water and pasture, political representation, and other issues—interests in stability dominate both sides of the border. The painstaking work to forge durable community peace in this remote region, which in the 1990s was considered one of the most dangerous in all of Kenya, has been a remarkable achievement. From 2008 to 2011, Shabaab authorities who controlled the border areas of Somalia had to defer to local demands that they not upset working relations across the border, which guaranteed unimpeded trade and access to schools and health care posts on both sides of the border. Military buildups in 2011 by Kenya, Ethiopia, and their proxies drew hardline Shabaab figures to the border area and have upset these arrangements. The Kenyan military offensive could help clear out those hardliners. Importantly, Kenya need not eliminate Shabaab entirely from its border areas; it only needs to create conditions in which local communities can reassert their influence over and hence moderate the actions of whatever residual Shabaab units remain in the border areas. The result is likely to be a string of cross-border village, town, and district arrangements mainly managed by Somalis.

A critically important detail in this regard is Kenya's own major political reforms, which include a process of decentralization that will give newly established counties a high

degree of self-rule. In the past, district commissioners in Kenya's border areas played an important role partnering with local communities in cross-border diplomacy. But those district commissioners were appointed by the central government and did not come from the Somali Kenyan population. They thus acted on behalf of the central government. Now county governors will be elected by the local population and their cross-border diplomacy could be reshaped as a result, in ways that are difficult to predict. If they engage in cross-border diplomacy that reflects local clan rather than national priorities, local peacebuilding along the border could be complicated.

Jubbaland regional state. On the surface, the problem of a post-intervention Jubbaland administration is a matter of reconciling Kenya's multiple Somali partners. This is not a simple task, and in reality is only one part of a broader power-sharing challenge. Not only do these groups not get along, but a critical additional Somali ally—the TFG leadership in Mogadishu has been cool toward the entire enterprise of forming a Jubbaland state and was embarrassingly publicly divided about whether it even supported the Kenyan military offensive.⁹ The TFG leadership generally sees the declaration of autonomous regional entities like Jubbaland as a threat, not an opportunity.¹⁰ Unless put under sustained external pressure, the TFG leadership could be tempted to unravel any local deal to share power in Jubbaland. In essence, this means that any attempt to establish a Jubbaland state could face resistance from both Shabaab and the TFG.

Realistically, there are very few prospects of a functional Jubbaland regional government in the short term, and few political hopefuls in the region really aspire to make it happen. Their attention is either on national political positions in Mogadishu or on control of Kismayo.

It makes little sense, then, to devote time and energy to broker a deal over a regional administration that is likely only to produce conflict and divisions that Shabaab will exploit. Instead, Jubbaland should be approached as strictly a vehicle for constitutive representation in the National Constitutive Assembly and post-transitional parliament, as envisioned in the December 2011 Garowe Conference. It should be seen for the near term as a representative, not operational, entity, focused solely on ensuring that local communities in the Jubba regions have adequate representation in transitional and post-transition national assemblies. When conditions are more conducive, it can gradually take on actual administrative roles.

Kismayo. Kismayo is the prize that matters most in the region. If a durable deal can be struck on Kismayo, the rest of the region will be relatively easy to solve. The political challenge for Kenya and any other governments seeking to shape a positive outcome in Kismayo is that regional clans have all advanced very inflated claims about their rights to the port city. These disparate claims have been part of the reason the city has remained so contested for 20 years.

There are two approaches to a new political dispensation in Kismayo that are likely to fail, and yet they are the two most likely to attract external support. The first is the “victor’s peace” approach: external acquiescence or support to clan domination of the city, most likely by the Ogaden represented by the Ras Kamboni militia, or a narrow coalition of Ogaden and Marehan clans. If the Ras Kamboni leadership has its way, its militia will help capture the city and will look to build alliances with selected clans, but with these two dominant clans maintaining a controlling interest in the seaport and its revenues. As argued above, this will produce armed resistance from other clans and will play into Shabaab’s hands. Kenya will be accused of supporting a narrow clan agenda linked to powerful Ogaden interests within the Kenyan government, which risks domestic problems in Kenya’s large Somali population as well.

A second strategy to avoid is the “clan-based unity government”: the impulse to recreate a Jubbaland version of the “4.5 formula” specific to Kismayo.¹¹ This would almost certainly be a pact brokered between the three major Darood clans—the Marehan, Ogaden, and Harti—with some representation for all of the non-Darood clans and social groups in the region. By this logic it would constitute a “3.5 formula.”

There are two major problems with this approach. First, the Darood clans have never in 20 years agreed on a sharing of power and resources in Kismayo. The splits both between and within them are raw and easily exploited by spoilers. Second, even a durable Darood pact would alienate the many non-Darood clans residing in the region and (in the case of the Haber Gedir Ayr subclan) those with strong economic interests in Kismayo, providing Shabaab with ready allies. Twenty years of turmoil in Somalia amply demonstrates that clan coalitions are inherently unstable and exceptionally prone to manipulation and defections.

A cosmopolitan strategy toward Kismayo

Instead of these options that are unlikely to work, a new approach is needed, one which is both realistic and aspirational. Kismayo is in some respects the ideal setting for such an experiment.

Kismayo needs to be a setting where Somalis agree explicitly to create a “cosmopolitan city”—one in which all Somalis have full rights to live, work, own property, and operate businesses. Indigenous clans may be accorded special quotas for public employment or other entitlements—details that should be worked out by Somalis—but an accord over the city should clearly state the rights of nonindigenous Somalis as well. This would reassure other Somali clans that fear being shut out of the city’s business opportunities and set a positive precedent for the rest of Somalia, where federalism has too often degenerated into exclusivist clan claims on rights and resources within a federal state. The extraordinary potential of the seaport as an entrepôt for trade into the rest of East

Africa could serve as the basis for a “pax commercial” of business groups with a vested interest in peace, stability, and open roads.

How to handle the inevitable struggle to control over the lucrative seaport revenues? One answer is to take the revenues out of the equation. Serious consideration should be given to a temporary international custodial control over customs revenues, along the lines of the International Civil Aviation Organization, which exercises trusteeship authority over Somali airspace, collecting over-flight revenues on behalf of Somalia and investing the funds back into airport maintenance and air traffic control. A highly transparent and closely monitored international customs authority at Kismayo port could generate substantial revenue for urban public works projects and a modest civil service, serve as a conflict prevention tool in the short term, and introduce a badly needed model for good management over public funds in Somalia.

The biggest impediment to this vision of a “new Kismayo” is the claims of local clans. Why should they allow others to share in the opportunities of the city when the same privilege has not been extended to them in other regions of Somalia? A persuasive case has to be made by eminent Somalis and foreign diplomats that local clans will benefit enormously from the rapid growth in trade, jobs, and real estate investment that would follow a commercial peace in Kismayo. They can point to other examples of cosmopolitan Somali cities—most notably Hargeisa, but to a lesser extent Jigjiga (eastern Ethiopia) and Garissa (northern Kenya), where local clans have enjoyed significant economic benefits from welcoming “outside” Somalis to live and do business there.

Who must be at the table for this dialogue over Kismayo? Rival Somali claimants to Kismayo must be convened along with eminent Somali civil society leaders, the TFG, business leaders, and others. Business figures could be critical in this regard. Somalis have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to forge broad partnerships in pursuit of profitable business opportunities, even in a context of war and state collapse. Kismayo is ideally situated to encourage that kind of new politics in Somalia.

The Kenyan government cannot facilitate this kind of Somali dialogue alone—this requires broader diplomatic engagement by key donor governments from the West, the Islamic world, the United Nations, the African Union, and regional external actors. The details of a governing arrangement need to be hammered out by Somalis, not foreigners, but the general principle of open access is something external actors can and should insist on.

The odds of things going badly in Kismayo are high, but a post-Shabaab political dispensation in the port city also offers a unique opportunity for Somalis to chart a new, more inclusive, and more promising approach to the governance of major cities and towns, one which embraces a vision of Somalia’s urban spaces as cosmopolitan zones where all citizens are welcome to pursue livelihoods, not sites of exclusive clan claims. Though

there are good reasons to second-guess the Kenyan military intervention, it could produce an unexpected and rare window of opportunity in Kismayo. That opportunity will be missed unless diplomatic initiatives get underway immediately.

Endnotes

- 1 On December 2, Defense Minister Yusuf Haji claimed that the Kenyan objective was only to secure the border area, “not necessarily” to take Kismayo. Yet when the offensive was first launched, the Kenyan army spokesperson described it as ultimately leading to the capture of Kismayo. See Radio Netherlands International, “Kenya ‘Not Necessarily’ Aiming for Kismayo: Minister,” December 2, 2011, available at <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/kenya-not-necessarily-aiming-kismayo-minister>
- 2 Andrew Teyie, “Kenya: 2009 Census Delayed over Somali Numbers,” The Star (Nairobi) reprinted at All-Africa.com, January 9, 2010, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201001120871.html>; see also Samuel Siringi, “Eight Districts to Get Bigger Share of Constituency Cash,” Saturday Nation (Nairobi), December 3, 2011, p. 6.
- 3 Kipchumba Some, “Military Action in Somalia was Planned for Years, Says US Cables,” Daily Nation, December 17, 2011. It is still not clear that Shabaab was directly responsible for any of the kidnappings, but Shabaab appears to be colluding with the kidnapers and is now holding the captives. This is one of many examples of Shabaab’s growing linkages to criminal networks in the region, including with the pirates.
- 4 As will be argued later in this briefing paper, clan is not the sole source of social and political organization in southern Somalia, but in the Jubba regions clanism has been consistently and destructively mobilized in land disputes.
- 5 Some evidence suggests that Kismayo is now a transit point for an expanding drug trade into Kenya, one that may implicate officials in the Kenyan government. See Peter Gastrow, “Termites at Work: Transnational Organized Crime and State Erosion in Kenya” (New York: International Peace Institute, September 2011).
- 6 One political figure who has rejected the premise that Kismayo must serve as Jubbaland’s capital is Prof. Mohamed Abdi Gandhi, Somalia’s former defense minister who assumed the presidency of the semiautonomous region in April 2011. Gandhi has instead announced plans to make the small town of Buale on the Jubba River the region’s capital. This remarkable proclamation was justified on the grounds that Buale is in the center of the region. Unfortunately Buale is also extremely isolated and cut off from the rest of Somalia for four to five months of the year in the rainy seasons.
- 7 Shabaab, which has controlled Kismayo and most of the region since 2008, has come closest to making good on this claim.
- 8 Rashid Abdi and E.J. Hogendoorn, “Kenya: Risks and Opportunities in Kenya’s Intervention in Somalia,” International Crisis Group, published in the Kenyan Daily Nation, November 19, 2011, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/kenya/op-eds/OpEd-Kenya-19Nov.aspx>
- 9 TFG President Sheikh Sharif, who is heavily dependent on support from regional states Uganda and Kenya, stunned his neighbors by publicly criticizing the Kenyan military incursion into the Jubba regions. Shortly thereafter the TFG Ministry of Information issued a “clarification” on the issue.
- 10 The most recent example of this occurred in Beled Weyn, where a local force calling itself the Shabelle Valley Administration worked with Ethiopian forces to drive Shabaab out of the area. TFG Prime Minister Abdiweli refused to recognize the group as a legitimate local authority.
- 11 The “4.5 formula” is a contentious system of proportional representation adopted by Somali political figures since the late 1990s in which each of the four major clans is accorded one seat and “minority clans” given .5 of a seat in any system of representation.

Enough is a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. Founded in 2007, Enough focuses on the crises in Sudan, South Sudan, eastern Congo, and areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. Enough conducts intensive field research, develops practical policies to address these crises, and shares sensible tools to empower citizens and groups working for change. To learn more about Enough and what you can do to help, go to www.enoughproject.org.

