

The Forgotten Highway

MOGADISHU-BAIDOA CORRIDOR



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Acronym

| | |
|--------|---|
| AfDB | The African Development Bank |
| AMISOM | The African Union Mission in Somalia |
| CBA | Cash Based Assistance |
| CONOPs | Concept of Operations |
| FGS | The Federal Government of Somalia |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| SIF | The Somalia Infrastructure Fund |
| SNA | The Somalia National Army |
| SRCIP | The Somalia Regional Corridors Infrastructure Programme |
| SW | The SouthWest State of Somalia |
| UNSOS | United Nations Support Office Somalia |

Executive Summary

The Mogadishu-Baidoa highway, a vital Somalia trade corridor connecting Mogadishu's seaport and the productive Southwest region with Ethiopia and Kenya, is a lifeline for millions of people, including 600,000 IDPs in Baidoa. The Highway, 'reopened' on April 2, 2013, remains neglected for over 10 years due to disrepair and the proliferation of illegal checkpoints. More than 30 checkpoints along the highway, some as close as every 7 kilometres, impose passage fees annually costing road users an estimated \$50 million. Al-Shabab maintains the most lucrative checkpoint, collecting over \$10 million per year. On July 11, 2023, Al-Shabab imposed a hard blockade on Baidoa in South West State (SWS), cutting off supplies and worsening the humanitarian situation.

AMISOM aimed to degrade Al-Shabab and secure the Mogadishu-Baidoa highway, but it continues to receive Sector 3 supply by air. The US has a large military base in Balidogle along the highway but given US military might and advanced drone technology could not eliminate Al-Shabab from operating lucrative checkpoint at its doorstep. The UK trained the SNA in Baidoa and pledged support to reopen the road. Currently, FGS is planning to launch phase two to eliminate Al-Shabab from SWS and Jubaland states.

The Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway is a crucial transport route for economic development, but it is in poor condition. Surprisingly, despite being classified as a high-impact project, it was excluded from major infrastructure investments. The road was systematically omitted from AfDB/EU-funded projects under the Somalia Regional Corridors Infrastructure Program (SRCIP) in favour of safer areas, despite its high rating in terms of population served per kilometre.

Urgent actions are needed to address security challenges and improve road infrastructure to facilitate smoother movement of goods and services.

Introduction

The Mogadishu-Baidoa highway reopened in April 2013 and was initially seen as a significant move to facilitate trade and humanitarian aid. However, after 10 years, the road remains unusable due to years of disrepair and passage fees from proliferated checkpoints emanating from state failure and continued insurgency. Road users experience coercion, harassment, sexual violence and forced bribes to pass through. Tragically, civilians have lost their lives due to checkpoint-related incidents, worsening security and hindering the smooth flow of goods and services and causing major socio-economic consequences.

Convoys with commercial goods and aid trucks routinely strand for weeks and sometimes convoy vehicles and shipments are burned. Since 2017, extortion at checkpoints are on the rise in Somalia. Commuters use a seasonal earthen road during the dry season to avoid ruined and worn-out asphalt roads and roadblocks. A plane is the only means to travel between Mogadishu and Baidoa for government staff and aid workers. Sexual violence is also prevalent in Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway perpetrated by armed men at checkpoints (UN Secretary-General 2015, p. 13). In July 2018, 14 women were raped on Mogadishu-Baidoa Road in just 2 days.

On July 11, 2023, Al-Shabab imposed blockade in Baidoa effectively cutting off Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway. The blockage highlights the importance of the Highway for the lives of millions of people. AMISON's strategy to retake the road has failed and the Somali government is now planning to reopen the Highway under its second phase of military offensive against Al-Shabab although the first phase, started in August 2002, is yet to be concluded.

This paper examines the security and actors along the 241km highway and its implications on humanitarian, development, and economic aspects. The finding of this paper is based on interviews conducted between April to June 2023 with businessmen in Baidoa & Mogadishu, truck drivers, FGS and SWS employees, and NGO representatives in Baidoa.



Taxing Cost of the Roadblocks

03

The Mogadishu-Baidoa highway is plagued by numerous illegal checkpoints, making it a highly lucrative route. These checkpoints start from Ex-Control (on the outskirts of Mogadishu) to Maanya-Fuulka, Baidoa. Currently, there are 31 static checkpoints along the Mogadishu-Baidoa highway - 19 are manned by clan militia, 6 by SWS administration, 4 by SNA and one by Al-Shabab. On average there is one checkpoint every 7 kilometres, in some cases, checkpoints are within a few hundred meters. Since 2016, there has been a 55% increase in the number of checkpoints, mainly added by the SWS administration and clan militia.

The attached map (Appendix I) provides an overview of the static checkpoints manned by state and non-state armed actors, along with a matrix ((Appendix II) detailing the locations and fees charged by each operator.

- Between Mogadishu and Afgoye, there are six checkpoints (3 by SWS, 2 by Federal police, and 1 by SNA).
- Afgoye has four checkpoints (3 by Federal Police, 1 by SWS).
- From Afgoye to Balidogle, eight checkpoints are mainly run by the SNA and clan militia, with the main checkpoint in Jamecada controlled by Al-Shabaab.

Militias and police and SNA units often charge varying, multiple, and high fees along their road segments; cargo and people are still subject to ambushes, robberies, and rapes. In contrast, checkpoints manned by al Shabab charge one uniform fee, with entering vehicles receiving a receipt, and the people and cargo allowed to proceed safely. The extortion fees at each checkpoint vary, ranging from \$2 to nearly \$2000, depending on the vehicle type. For example, a 30-tonne truck travelling from Bakara market to Baidoa market may be extorted over \$8000 for a one-way trip, while smaller vehicles like 8-seater minibuses may be taxed over \$300 per trip. On average, about 20 small vehicles and 30 trucks use the highway daily, costing road users an estimated total of \$248,220 per day or \$50 million annually in payments to these checkpoints. [1]

[1] As the road is used dry season it is estimated 200 days instead of 365 days.

Al-Shabab Checkpoints

The collection of tolls at roadblocks along the Mogadishu-Baidoa route is a major source of domestic revenue for al-Shabab. Their most profitable checkpoint is in Jamecada, located between Leego and Bur Hakaba. Despite maintaining only one checkpoint, Al-Shabab charges significantly high fees, \$30 for small vehicles and \$1950 for trucks carrying commercial goods. Additionally, Al-Shabab introduced registration fees for new vehicles, imposing \$2000+ on big trucks and \$500 on smaller vehicles. In 2018, they doubled their rates.[1] Their revenue in 2018 reached approximately \$30,000 per day, totalling \$10 million for the year[2] and in 2022 Al-Shabab revenue from the Highway reached \$100 million a year.

Al-Shabab employs a predictable system of checkpoint taxation on main supply routes in southern and central Somalia, charging a uniform fee for safe passage. [3] Receipts are provided to individuals passing through their checkpoints, and taxes are paid once per trip from Mogadishu to a destination. Paying these fees ensures safe passage through both Al-Shabab controlled areas and government-held areas where militants are active. Al-Shabab stops and checks vehicles along the highway at Jamecada where they maintain a relatively static checkpoint. They temporarily disappear from the road when AMISOM columns approach but reestablish the checkpoint once the column passes. The targeting of Al-Shabab financial officers and taxation checkpoints has recently increased, but the group has shown the ability to replace members systematically with trained alternates. The "taxation" system is enforced through intimidation and violence, and non-compliance results in severe consequences. [4] Those who refuse to pay are forced to shut down their businesses, flee the country, or face the risk of being killed. [5]

Although Al-Shabab is only permanently present around 40kms (between Lego and Jamecada) they enforce a complete prohibition on governmental, NGOs, and all UN agencies from using the Highway. They maintain blockades on government-controlled towns and violently attack civilians who attempt to break the blockades, destroying goods and vehicles in the process. Al-Shabab's extensive informant network allows them to identify government officials travelling on the highway, making it highly dangerous for such individuals. [6] In recent times, their intensified activities have led to confrontations with local communities in SWS, resulting in restricted movement between rural and urban centres and limited transport services. This situation has caused a scarcity of food items in local markets, and ambushes on convoys along the Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway have become common occurrences. On June 26, 2015, Al-Shabab militants attacked an AMISOM base in the Lego district, killing over 70 Burundian soldiers and briefly gaining control of the military base. Following this attack, AMISOM abandoned the base on August 4, 2015. On the same day, Al-Shabab seized the town, cutting off road access from Mogadishu to the Bay and Bakool regions.[7]

[1] CNN. Funding al-Shabab: How aid money ends up in terror group's hands. February 12, 2018

[2] <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/report-says-al-Shabab-militants-run-tax-system-to-rival-somalia-s-federal-government-1.778883>

[3] IFIT. The Limits Of Punishment: Transitional Justice And Violent Extremism: Somalia Case Study. May 2018

[4] Ibid.

[5] United Nations Security Council. The Panel of Experts Report on Somalia (S/2020/949). 28 September 2020

[6] the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Treasury Designates al-Shabab Financial Facilitators. October 17, 2022

[7] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch: Somalia, August 2017

Somali National Army (SNA) and Federal Police

FGS-sanctioned checkpoints along the Mogadishu-Afgoye Highway are intended to monitor movement, identify criminals and terrorists, and locate bombs and contraband items. However, Al-Shabab equipment and fighters still manage to infiltrate Mogadishu by travelling via the Mogadishu-Afgoye corridor along the Shabelle River[1]. Despite having a significant number of permanent checkpoints along the Highway, Al-Shabab continues to carry out attacks on key installations in Mogadishu. These attacks have exposed the vulnerabilities of Somalia's security checkpoints and the failure of FGS to effectively deter Al-Shabab's attacks.

Checkpoints manned by the SNA frequently stop motorists along the Mogadishu-Afgoye-Baidoa road, demanding small payments at each stop. Although the individual amounts may be relatively small, the cumulative burden becomes significant, making the entire journey unprofitable for drivers. These payments are a serious financial burden for road users. The SNA soldiers often collect these revenues for themselves for the government or the State. The government has been unable to prevent them from doing so, leading to resentment from the civilian population. These roadblocks are technically illegal, resembling clan militia-operated checkpoints. The main motive behind these roadblocks seems to be economic gain rather than security checks and controls. Despite the government paying SNA salaries on time and increasing their salaries, SNA soldiers continue to extort passage fees at the checkpoints.

These checkpoints serve as easy money-making initiatives, primarily used to cover expenses such as khat and family needs. Some of the collected money goes to the area's commander, while a portion is given to the regional administration.

The following are checkpoints operated by SNA and Federal Police along the Mogadishu-Baidoa route:

- At Ex-Control, manned by SNA, police, and NISA, a pick-up truck is charged \$221, and minibuses are charged \$11.
- Between Ex-Control and Afgoye, trucks pay \$260.
- Between Afgoye and Mogadishu, the SNA checkpoints impose a levy of \$260 on each truck.
- There are three SNA checkpoints in Xarashiinaha where trucks are charged \$435 at each checkpoint, and small vehicles are charged \$13.
- At the SNA-manned checkpoint in Daynuunay, trucks are charged \$100, and smaller vehicles are charged \$2 to \$5.
- Federal police in Bakin (Baidoa) impose \$5 on smaller vehicles and \$10 on trucks.

Trading businesses and road users receive little in return in terms of security or an improved business environment along the highway.

[1] UK Home Office. Country Policy and Information Note Somalia: Al Shabab. November 2020

South West State (SWS) Security

The SWS Special Police forces were established in late 2014 to combat al-Shabab and retake territory from them. Initially, their fighting morale was high, and they worked alongside Ethiopian forces in the anti-Shabab fight. However, the force disintegrated in 2017, and its attrition rate dramatically increased due to effective desertion campaigns by Al-Shabab. The overall country security hinges on the defeat of Al-Shabaab which controls significant territories in Southwest State. While there are significant military successes against Al-Shabab in Hirshabele and Galmudug, SWS is losing territories to Al-Shabab. In December 2022 Al-Shabab took over the Daynuunay along the Highway soon after SNA forces vacated the villages. The SWS security lacked coordination, leadership, and incentives to continue fighting. SWS administration recruited the entire State security from State president sub-clan and is now facing public backlash for not being able to garner the support of the people, which is important in the fight against Al-Shabab.

Some of the former fighters of the SWS Special Police force joined clan militias and colluded with the SNA to set up illegal checkpoints in rival communities, exploiting those communities and extorting vehicles passing through. The checkpoints and their charges are as follows:

- SWS 'Special' Police at a checkpoint in Buurhakaba impose \$135 on big trucks and \$2-5 on smaller vehicles.
- SWS 'Special' Police in Mayafulka impose \$5-10 on big trucks and \$2-\$5 for smaller vehicles.
- The SWS administration imposes \$391 on big trucks that come to Baidoa.

These checkpoints and fees further contribute to the financial burden on transport and trading businesses along the highway.





Clan Militia

Along the Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway, many checkpoints are manned by clan militias. Clan conflicts in Somalia arise irregularly over resources like grazing land and water sources. These conflicts escalate to the point where clan members take up arms, and checkpoints mark zones of control for the warring clans. Wanlaweyn district has experienced a significant amount of clan conflict, with the highest number of checkpoints and recurring clashes. In June 2019, heavy fighting erupted between rival clan militias in the Wanlaweyn district resulting in over twenty deaths, including women and children, and thousands of displaced individuals. [1]

In the Lower Shabelle region, most of the checkpoints are manned by clan militia and each checkpoint is associated with a specific clan due to the identity of the soldiers stationed there. Between Afgoye and Leego, each big truck pays \$652 at these checkpoints.

Wanlaweyn district has experienced a significant amount of clan conflict, with the highest number of checkpoints and recurring clashes.

[1] <https://goobjooge.net/80-qof-oo-lagu-dilay-dagaal-beeleedyo-ka-socda-soomaliya-xilli-uu-dunida-ku-faafayo-coronavirus-warbixin/>

Foreign Intervention

04

According to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Concept of Operations (CONOPs) 2018 – 2021, the plan was to degrade Al-Shabaab and secure the Mogadishu-Baidoa highway by June 30, 2019. Following this, a battalion was to be deployed to strategic positions along the highway to safeguard it and protect key population centres along the Mogadishu-Baidoa Road. However, UNSOS continues to supply AMISOM and the Somali army in Sector 3 by air, leading to delays and incurring high demurrage charges for equipment. [1] For example, the AMISOM police unit's equipment destined for Baidoa has been in Mogadishu for over a year, resulting in delays in deploying the police unit provided by Ghana. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) replaced the 15-year-long AMISOM and is mandated with a full transition of security operations to the Somali National Armed Forces by the end of 2024.

The US base, located in the south about 90 kilometres (62 miles) northwest of Mogadishu, is used for conducting counterinsurgency and drone operations. US's main purpose for their presence in Baledogle is not about the security and wellbeing of the local community but to advance US national interests as clearly stated in the posture statements. Specifically, to tap into Somalia's vast natural resources, protect strategic East Africa's Sea lines of communication and counter power competition with China and Russia. In 2019 the U.S. announced that it will develop a supply route connecting the Lemonnier base in Djibouti to Baledogle. The routes in Somalia alone would cost at least \$75 million. U.S. military personnel usually make the 60-mile trip from Mogadishu to Baledogle in a helicopter.[2]

The question is how the US is going to build a road that runs through about three-quarters of the country controlled by Al-Shabaab; warlords with private militias; and a tense border region with Ethiopia, when Al-Shabaab attacked the US facility in the Baledogle[3] and their profitable checkpoint is located a few kilometres from the US base. USAID under its TIS+ programme could not secure a contractor to construct a 4 km long stretch between Baledogle and Wanlewein. Before their withdrawal in January 2021, there were around 800 U.S. troops in Somalia. It is inconceivable US military might and advanced drone technology could not eliminate Al-Shabaab's risk of operating a lucrative checkpoint at its doorstep.

Since 2017, the British military has been conducting multiple training programs for the SNA in Baidoa. around 2,000 officers and soldiers have participated in various military courses at the British-funded training centre in Baidoa.[4] In November 2020, the UK Government pledged support to the SWS Administration in reopening the road connecting Baidoa to Mogadishu. There are reports that the UK is preparing to deploy additional elite troops to Somalia for this mission, which is expected to launch in late Spring 2022. The deployment was aimed to bolster efforts in reopening and securing the vital road link between the two cities. [5]

[1] United Nations Security Council (S/2018/411) 2 May 2018

[2] ForeignPolicy.com- U.S. Developing Supply Route Along Dangerous Stretch from Djibouti to Somalia. 21 Jan 2019

[3] ABC news. An American service member injured in al-Shabaab attack in Somalia: US military. 2 Oct 2019

[4]<https://www.defenceweb.co.za/land/land-land/british-army-trains-500th-somali-soldier-in-infantry-skills/>

[5] <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/elite-brit-terror-troups-sent-25331887>

Humanitarian Impact

05

Road infrastructure and the availability of safe and affordable transport services play a crucial role in fostering social and economic development, reducing poverty, and enhancing food security and productivity. Unfortunately, nearly 5 million residents in the Southwest region of Somalia, approximately 25% of the country's population, lack access to safe road networks. Currently, around 5.9 million people in Somalia are facing acute food insecurity, with approximately 3.5 million of them expected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity[1], particularly in the Southwest region.[2] Furthermore, more than 2.6 million people in Somalia are internally displaced, facing the risk of marginalization, forced eviction, and exclusion.[3] Baidoa is home to about 600,000 internally displaced people, according to the United Nations, highlighting the urgent need for improved road infrastructure and services to support their livelihoods and access to essential resources.[4]

The lack of road access in SWS districts due to insecurity is severely impacting the delivery of humanitarian supplies. Al Shabab's encirclement of urban areas in the Southwest State has turned them into enclave towns. The group enforces a "soft blockade" with heavy taxation and inspection of goods and people passing through, while some towns face a "hard blockade," allowing access only by air or with AMISOM armed convoys. This restricted flow of goods between Mogadishu and Baidoa is making it difficult to sustain livelihoods and access essential supplies limiting availability of humanitarian aid for affected communities.

The use of checkpoints for territorial control and revenue generation has been a longstanding obstacle to delivering humanitarian assistance in Somalia. In the early 1990s, during Operation Provide Relief, the UN humanitarian effort faced significant challenges, leading to large-scale hijacking, and looting of international food convoys, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Powerful warlords controlled the Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway and charged grossly inflated shipping rates to the United Nations.[5] The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Somalia continues to present a dilemma for donors and non-profit organizations when operating in areas controlled by Al-Shabab.

Many Western countries have designated Al-Shabab as a terrorist organization, leading to a ban on Western aid to areas under its control. To address the challenges of running food convoys vulnerable to attacks and theft, and for compliance reasons, the UN and aid agencies shifted to a direct payment system known as Cash Based Assistance (CBA). CBA has been used since 2003 and significantly scaled up in 2017 during the response to the famine crisis. In 2017, Cash Based Assistance during the Emergency Drought Response in Somalia amounted to \$259.0 million.[6] The use of cash-based assistance has been crucial in providing essential aid while adapting to the security challenges in areas controlled by Al-Shabab. Refugees and IDPs use cash cards to buy goods from local merchants.

[1] <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-food-security-and-malnutrition-snapshot-afi-july-december-2021>

[2] <https://www.fsnau.org/downloads/SOMALIA-Food-Security-Outlook-October-2021-to-May-2022.pdf>

[3] <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2021-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>

[4] https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/cccm_somalia

[5] Los Angeles Times: Somali Peril Not Over, U.S. Says : Famine: Troops secure Baidoa., DEC. 17, 1992

[6] <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/166201530872132262/Somalia-Summary-of-Activities-Funded-by-the-Rapid-Social-Response-Trust-Fund-TFOA3246.docx>

Humanitarian Impact....Cont'd

However, to transport goods to the market, businessmen must pay road tax and monthly protection fees to Al-Shabaab, leading to higher prices for goods. These additional costs are passed on to consumers, resulting in inflated prices. Ultimately, it is the ordinary citizens in Southwest who bear the burden of these increased costs.

It appears that various stakeholders, including aid organizations, local governments, Al-Shabaab, and businesses, benefit from keeping the Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway closed, as they rely on a vulnerable and exploitable population. Aid has become a business, and within the aid system, many aid staff members are part of the marginalization process and collude with local authorities. Local authorities, especially district commissioners, play a significant role in the allocation of aid. They have the power to select beneficiaries and control the distribution of aid, giving them increased influence and control - the aid resources becoming tools of power and control in the region.

Telecom companies in Somalia have gained significant influence, especially with the adoption of cash transfers by the aid community. They charge fees to aid organizations in registering new beneficiaries and mandate the purchase of phones and SIM cards for fund transfers. Their considerable cash holdings from these transactions have boosted their financial power and further solidifies their position, making them key players in Somalia's economic landscape.

In SWS, where a significant part of the population relies on food aid, the main supply route from Mogadishu is littered with checkpoints, costing between \$1,500 to \$4,500 per trip for trucks delivering humanitarian relief. Mogadishu-based contractors have benefited greatly, becoming wealthy businessmen known as oligarchs. There are allegations of collusion between these contractors, checkpoint operators, and Al-Shabaab. While the exact percentage of revenue shared with checkpoint operators and Al-Shabaab is not known, it is believed to be substantial, creating a troubling situation that hinders the smooth delivery of humanitarian aid and adds to the challenges faced in the region.

The system of roadblocks persists because transporters in conflict zones pass on the costs to their customers or NGOs. Donor countries often overlook the situation to avoid being associated with conflict financing. The lack of accountability and responsibility hinders finding a long-term solution to the checkpoint problem in the region. Hence, donor countries end up paying the costs of the checkpoint to ensure aid delivery.

Economic Impact

06

Holding economic growth hostage

The Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway serves as a crucial trade corridor connecting Somalia with Ethiopia and Kenya. Agriculture and livestock play a significant role in the Somali economy, with the Southwest region being a vital agricultural area. However, the security situation and toll fees along the route have disrupted trade and led to additional costs for businesses.

Agriculture and livestock play a crucial role in the Somali economy, constituting 65% of the country's economic activity and employing around 65% of its labour force. Within this sector, livestock rearing alone contributes to 40% of the total GDP or 62% of the agricultural GDP. The economy of the Southwest State (SWS) is primarily agrarian, and the region is often referred to as the "breadbasket of Somalia" due to its agricultural significance and productivity. Baidoa is known for significant sorghum production and consumption. Traders in Baidoa have strong links with Mogadishu's main market, but security challenges have shifted supply routes, impacting trade. As a result, there are differences in retail prices for Sorghum (Red) between the two cities, with Baidoa having a nominal retail price of 5000 shillings per kg compared to 8,000 per kg in Mogadishu.[1] These price variations reflect the importance of agriculture and its impact on regional markets and livelihoods in Somalia.

Insecurity along the corridor hampers business expansion and job creation, highlighting the need for restoring security. The insecurity of the highway led aviation services boom mainly driven by aid, governance, and medical emergency events. Bus travel from Mogadishu to Baidoa costs between \$15 and \$30 per trip, depending on the bus type, while flights between the two cities which take around 1 hour, cost \$120.



[1] <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-price-bulletin-january-2021>

Transportation Infrastructure

07

The Mogadishu-Baidoa Highway was initially built during the Italian colonial period. In 1971 with the assistance of the International Development Association (IDA), it was reconstructed and designed to have a service life of seven years. However, by 1980, the road was in poor condition and needed reconstruction. The World Bank funded the reconstruction project with US\$29.7 million under the Somalia-Fourth Highway Project. A Chinese contractor supervised by British consultants undertook the work. Despite the project's intentions, funding issues, delays in government responsiveness, and a lack of capable contractors led to only around 80 km of the original 216 km road being completed for US\$21.3 million in 1985. Since then, the road has not received proper maintenance, resulting in the formation of potholes and making it almost impassable and dangerous for vehicles.

The Ministry of Public Works, Housing, and Reconstruction (MPWHR) is a key ministry at the federal level, responsible for planning, designing, and constructing infrastructure, including national roads and bridges. However, Somalia faces resource constraints, making it challenging to fund infrastructure projects. Additionally, the MPWHR lacks the necessary organizational depth and capacity to effectively undertake and monitor large-scale investments in the road sector. To overcome these limitations The Multi-Partner Somalia Infrastructure Fund (SIF) was established to develop and rehabilitate key infrastructure. SIF is managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB). Between 2015 and 2016, the AfDB undertook a series of infrastructure needs assessments in Somalia including road transport.

In its assessment, AfDB proposed a new paved triple surface road covering 520 kilometres from Mogadishu to Baidoa and Beled Hawo, with an estimated cost of US\$229 million. This corridor was rated as the second highest in terms of population served per kilometre, indicating its significant potential impact on the population. However, in July 2019, AfDB, under the Somalia Regional Corridors Infrastructure Program (SRCIP), committed approximately US\$50 million for four corridors in Hirshabelle, Puntland, Galmudug, and Jubaland, excluding the Mogadishu–Baidoa corridor. The selected routes had smaller population shares compared to the abandoned routes in the Southwest.

The donor approach in Somalia often skips required prioritization processes in favour of quicker action in the field. The European Union (EU), which is set to fund 42 million Euros of the SRCIP, fully subscribed to this approach[1]. However, the EU document reviewed by the Aaran Center did not adequately explain the reasons for excluding the Mogadishu-Baidoa corridor[2]. The unequal allocation of projects by the AfDB and EU perpetuates regional disparities and marginalizes the SWS population, hindering potential economic development and social progress in the region.

Despite facing Al-Shabaab attacks, a Turkish company managed to pave 22 kilometres of the Mogadishu-Afgoye Highway, funded by the Qatar Fund for Development. A segment of the Mogadishu-Baidoa Road could have been rehabilitated closer to urban centres, but it was neglected. SWS is the only Federal Member State not benefiting from the Somali Infrastructure Fund (SIF) projects.

[1] <https://constructionreviewonline.com/news/us-49m-for-road-projects-under-somalia-regional-corridors-infrastructure/>

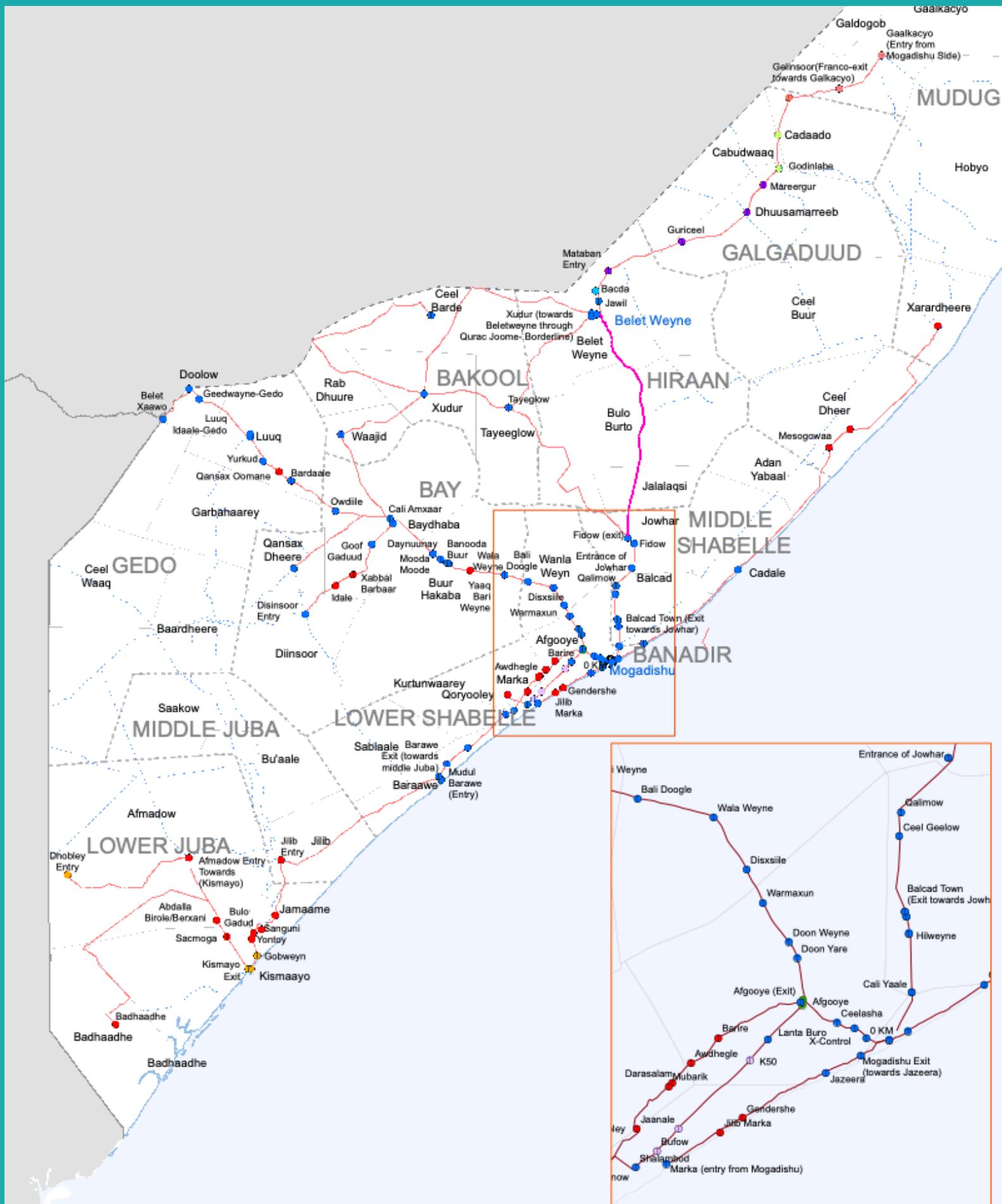
[2] EU Action Document for Somalia Regional Corridors Infrastructure Programme (SRCIP)

Recommendations

- FGS to speed up highly anticipated phase two offensive against Al-Shabab.
- SWS administration to hold election without further delays so people can choose new leadership with a new mandate.
- FGS to eradicate State and non-state sanctioned checkpoints along the Highway.
- Beef up State/local police numbers and capacity to become an effective holding forces for liberated areas and provide civilian protection.
- Create awareness among local communities residing along the Highway and garner their support to re-open the road.
- Reconcile warring clans along the highway
- ADB/EU to review its SIP project guidelines and ensure geographic balance for more inclusive and balanced development in Somalia.

08

Appendix I: Static Checkpoints in Southern and Central Somalia



Legend

- National capital
- Subsidiary Administration
- Al-Shabaab
- Somalia Major Roads

Map Reference: 161026_Static Checkpoints in Southern and Central Somalia
Creation Date: 26/10/2016
Projection/Datum: Geographic/WGS 84
Web Resource: www.unep.org/geoportal

Map data source(s):
 All Admin. layers: UNDP Somalia (1998)
 Breakage data: FAO-SWALIM (Feb 2016)
 AMISOM bases: UNSOS 2016

APPENDIX II: Static checkpoints

Mogadishu-- Baidoa– Dollow Road

| # | Check point Location | Distance from Mogadishu | Fees collected \$ | Actors |
|----|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Mogadishu (Bakara market) | | Security check | SNAF |
| 2 | X-control | 7 | 150 | SNAF |
| 3 | Siinka dheer | 12 | 150 | SNAF |
| 4 | Ceelasha | 15 | 100 | SNAF |
| 5 | Lafoole | 19 | 100 | |
| 6 | Afgooye | 30 | 150 | SNAF |
| 7 | Doon Yare | 40 | 100 | SNAF |
| 8 | Doon Weyne | 45 | 50 | SNAF |
| 9 | Warmaxun | 55 | 100 | SNAF |
| 10 | Tixsiile | 65 | 100 | SNAF |
| 11 | Wala Weyne | 90 | 200 | SNAF |
| 12 | Bali doogle | 105 | 150 | SNAF |
| 13 | Yaaq Bari Weyne | 120 | 150 | SNAF |
| 14 | Leego | 140 | 100 | SNAF |
| 15 | Jameeco | 160 | Security checks only. | Al Shabaab |
| 16 | Buur Hakaba | 180 | 200 | SNAF |
| 17 | Banooda Buur | 181 | 50 | SNAF |
| 18 | Mooda Moode | 189 | 50 | SNAF |
| 19 | Daynuunay | 195 | 100 | SNAF |
| 20 | Baydhabo | 220 | 200 | SNAF |
| 21 | Cali Amxaar | 222 | 50 | SNAF |
| 22 | Owdiile | 252 | 100 | SNAF |
| 23 | Bardaale | 297 | 150 | SNAF |
| 24 | Bardaale | 298 | 50 | SNAF |
| 25 | Qansax oomane | 312 | 1,500 (\$600 for the truck and \$900 for the goods.) | Al Shabab |
| 26 | Yurkud | 380 | 100 | SNAF |
| 27 | Luuq Idaale - Gedo | 422 | 50 | SNAF |
| 28 | Luuq town - Gedo | 425 | 150 | SNAF |
| 29 | Geedwayne – Gedo | 470 | 150 | SNAF |
| 30 | Doolow – Gedo | 500 | 200 | SNAF |
| 31 | Belet Xaawo – Gedo | 540 | 325(30,000 Kenyan shillings) | SNAF |

Source: OCHA October 2016

APPENDIX III: AfDB Infrastructure Needs Assessment



AfDB infrastructure needs assessments in Somalia

Geographical distribution of key corridors. The projects were identified for intervention based on population served per kilometer.

| ROAD NAME | LENGTH (KM) | REGIONS | POPULATION /KM | INTERVENTION | COST (US \$M) |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| MOGADISHU-BAIDOA - BELETHAWO | 520 | BENADIR, SOUTHWEST, JUBALAND | 3,523 | NEW PAVED | 229 |
| MOGADISHU-BELEDWEYNE-GALKAYO | 704 | BENADIR, HIRSHABELE, GALMUDUG | 3,079 | REHAB PAVED | 153 |
| KISMAYO - MERCA - MOGADISHU | 483 | BENADIR, SOUTHWEST, JUBALAND | 4,158 | REHAB PAVED | 105 |
| MOGADISHU-BAIDOA - BELETHAWO | 520 | BENADIR, SOUTHWEST, JUBALAND | 3,523 | NEW PAVED | 229 |
| BOSAASO-GAROWE ROAD | 410 | PUNTLAND | 1,963 | REHAB PAVED | 89 |
| GALKAYO-GAROWE | 240 | PUNTLAND | 2,510 | REHAB PAVED | 52 |
| GAROWE-LASANOD | 130 | PUNTLAND | 745 | REHAB PAVED | 28 |

APPENDIX IV: Static Checkpoints

Mogadishu - Baidoa Highway

