OCTOBER
SOMALIA’S SMUGGLING PROBLEM

The Federal Republic of Somalia\(^1\) is a country situated on the Horn of Africa, bordering Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. It was a colony of Italy\(^2\) until after the Second World War; it then came under British administration until Somali independence\(^3\) in 1960, establishing the Somali Republic\(^4\).

The republic lasted until 1969, when the government was overthrown\(^5\) and a new Somali Democratic Republic\(^6\) was established under the leadership of Siad Barre\(^7\). This new government engaged in numerous wars\(^8\) with its neighbor Ethiopia, primarily over the Ogaden region\(^9\). Failures in war, in addition to the growing authoritarianism of the regime promulgated the Somali Civil War\(^10\) in 1991. The ousting of Barre resulted in the complete collapse of the Somali political structure; the Southern parts of the country experienced particular violence with the rise of regional warlords\(^11\). The United Nations sent in a U.S.-led peacekeeping mission\(^12\) in 1993, only to withdraw in 1994 following the Battle of Mogadishu\(^13\). Further violence and the absence of a strong centralized state has caused for different regions of Somalia to be de facto\(^14\) independent.

While a new government has been established to try and remake Somalia into a centralized state, conflicting factions and warlords have prevented this\(^15\) from fully being realized and, for the most part, the country remains in a state of civil war and anarchy. As we
have stated, there exists a nominal state in Somalia—the Federal Republic of Somalia—but the actual power in the region is divided up between the central government, Islamic factions in the south, semi-autonomous provinces in the north, and regional Somali warlords. The absence of a sovereign has created the environment which allowed for smuggling to flourish. According to a special report by the U.S. Department of State, Somalia is both a source and destination in the human trafficking trade, where women and children are taken from the southern regions and sold to buyers in the north of the country as well as to other places like the Middle East.

In addition to being fueled by the absence of a strong centralized government, distrust of minorities, like the Bantu, may also be a factor in the ethnic Somali pirates continuing their practice. The pirating landscape reached a high in 2011, where 49 of the 52 ship seizures were committed by Somali pirates. The situation in Somalia has had consequences on its neighbors; both Kenya and Ethiopia have intervened in the Civil War at least once, and the humanitarian crisis has led to thousands seeking asylum in neighboring Kenya or trying to flee the country to Ethiopia or Yemen.

1The official long form of the country is the Federal Republic of Somalia.
2As part of the Scramble for Africa, Italy established a colony in the Horn of Africa called Italian Somaliland.
3Somalia became independent from the United Kingdom on July 1, 1960 following wave of Somali nationalism.
4The Somali Republic was the first government of an independent Somalia.
5On 21 October, elements of the Somali military launched a bloodless coup d'état, after which the Supreme Revolutionary Council was appointed as the new government under the leadership of Siad Barre.
The Somali Democratic Republic was a Soviet-aligned state founded to replace the old Somali government.

Mohamed Siad Barre (1919–1995) was an officer in the Somali army who served as the third president of Somalia; from the coup of 1969 to his ousting in 1991.

During Barre’s rule, Somalia engaged itself in a number wars with Ethiopia, as well as have border disputes with Kenya and Djibouti over ethnic Somalis living in these three countries.

The Ogaden region is a region in east Ethiopia that has a majority Somali population and the dispute over it was the cause of two wars between the two countries.

The Somali Civil War is a still-ongoing military conflict in Somalia between different factions vying for control of the country following the collapse of the Barre regime.

The dissolution of central power in Somalia led to the rise of warlords who charge taxes, wage war, and effectively run regions of the country.

A UN expedition was sent to Somalia, seen by many as an American mission to maintain their influence in Somalia.

The Battle of Mogadishu was a military engagement between American and Somali rebel forces; coverage of the battle by the American media led to public outcry towards participation in this foreign civil war.

De facto is a term that denotes a fact in the state of things despite legality (as opposed to de jure which means legally).

The Somali Civil War is still ongoing and the fragmented state of the country has made it hard for the central government to make any significant progress in its reunification.

Al-Shabaab is the primary Islamic faction in opposition to the Somali government; past opposition has included the Islamic Courts Union, which was defeated in 2008 with the help of the United States.

Somaliland in the north and Puntland in the northeast are two regions in Somalia which have been essentially independent from central Somali authority.

In political science, the sovereign is the final authority who holds and can exercise legitimate power; the absence of a sovereign has led to Somalia being called a failed state.
Somali pirating affects the economic prospects of the country by disrupting shipping in the Indian Ocean.

Mostly confined to protecting their own borders, Kenya and Ethiopia have on more than one occasion crossed into Somalia to help against Islamic insurgents. In 2013, al-Shabaab carried out an attack on a Nairobi mall in retribution.

The crisis in Somalia has left over a million displaced, with refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia having hundreds of thousands each. Despite a large number of refugees abiding in Kenya, the country has said it seeks to reduce the number of refugees in its country and has stated they will shut down the camp in Dadaab, the world’s largest refugee camp.

LET’S THINK ABOUT IT

Your SWAC leader will prompt you with questions revolving around the same idea: given the current situation in Somalia, do you see smuggling declining or persisting as a problem and why? Express your thoughts and contribute to discussion with your fellow peers!

MY THOUGHTS ON SOMALIA

(room to write your thoughts)

This lesson plan is meant as an aid for the Faculty Sponsor, President or Vice-President to lead their respective SWAC chapter in the discussion of this two weeks’ focus: Somalia and smuggling.

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Kahoot! Introductory Quiz

Kahoot! is an online Quiz platform. This small ten-question quiz is to test the student’s prior knowledge of Somalia and introduce them to the discussion to come. The quiz will require the proctor to have a Kahoot account in order to start. Students will use an electronic device in order to answer. The link is below; click START NOW and select Classic mode. After the Game PIN is generated, students will be able to join the session by accessing kahoot.it on their computer or mobile device. Begin the quiz once all students have joined! This activity shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.

LINK: https://goo.gl/7kRo4g

Lesson Handout

Now is when the handouts should be passed out to students. It is split into two sections, one which covers the history of Somalia and a second which covers the current smuggling situation and its effects. It is recommended that the handout be read aloud as a group instead of individually. Take some time after the document has been read to cover the material with the students and make sure that its been generally understood. Ask questions to students; get them to summarize what they’ve read and make sure that the students are engaged and understanding. The reading shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.

Video Resources

We have three video resources below that will go over in more detail the current event portion of the handout and expand upon it. Following each link we’ve included a description of the video and possible questions that you can ask students to see what they’ve taken away from watching the clips. Each video clip is between 2 and 5 minutes; coupled with questions, this segment shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.
A COMPLEX CRISIS: CONFLICT AND CLIMATE AFFECTING SOMALIS

LINK: https://goo.gl/HNsEof

This link is to a video posted in 2015 by an agency of the European Union in charge of humanitarian air which highlights the important crisis that is facing Somalia. It includes a narrated summary of both the conflict which plagues the country as well as the climatic challenges of famine that the country has had to endure in the last six years.

›Do you think that enough is being done to help Somalis in need? Is there any more that can be done?

›What is the course of action you think that the UN should take to face the humanitarian crisis?

HIDDEN WAR BETWEEN AMERICAN MERCENARIES, SOMALI SAILORS

LINK: https://goo.gl/9MN2rQ

Following the release of the film Captain Phillips, ABC news did a special report to show the real story behind the movie and the persisting issues surrounding Somali smuggling, including what is driving it and what is being done to combat it by shipping companies.

›Given the situation, can you see why some people would be drawn to smuggling and piracy? Does that make them justified in what they do?

›What’s your response to companies hiring private security to protect their vessels? Is it too much?
SOMALIA: PEOPLE SMUGGLING

LINK: https://goo.gl/P61Qnv

This is a 2007 video by the UN Refugee Agency which highlights the struggle of Somalis in their country and why some of them would undertake a risky journey with smugglers in order to flee and escape to Yemen or Saudi Arabia.

›How would you characterize the people who make the journey? Brave? Foolish? Desperate? Why?

DISCUSSION

Given the situation in Somalia, do you see smuggling declining or persisting as a problem? Why? Ask students to consider the recent U.S. involvement in defeating the Islamic Courts Union; would the United States also help fight piracy? Will private companies hiring security reduce the appeal of piracy or is Somalia’s situation still too conducive to smuggling? How can the situation be bettered? This shouldn’t take more than 10 minutes – total estimated meeting time: no more than 1 hour.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


