

## Somalia

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### 1 Key words

Use these words from the text to fill the gaps:

lawless      shack      warlord      clan      chaos  
embargo      roam      ambush      brazen      lucrative

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the leader of a group involved in fighting.
2. If an activity is described as \_\_\_\_\_, it produces a lot of money for those involved in it.
3. An \_\_\_\_\_ is a government order preventing trade with another country.
4. If you \_\_\_\_\_ the streets, you move around with no particular purpose.
5. If you behave in a \_\_\_\_\_ way, you behave in a way that is not moral or socially acceptable without caring if other people are shocked or offended.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large group of families that are related to each other.
7. If a place is \_\_\_\_\_, it has no laws or it has laws that no-one obeys.
8. A state of \_\_\_\_\_ is a situation when everything is confused and in a mess.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a small, plain building, usually made of wood or metal.
10. An \_\_\_\_\_ is an attack from a hidden position.

### 2 What do you know?

Choose the best answer. Then look in the text and check your answers:

1. What is the capital of Somalia?  
a Addis Ababa      b Mogadishu      c Baidoa
2. When was the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre overthrown?  
a 1981      b 1991      c 2001
3. What is the name of the region of Somalia that claims independence?  
a Eritrea      b Mogadishu      c Somaliland

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4. Which is probably the world's most dangerous city for a foreigner?  
a Mogadishu                      b Beirut                      c Addis Ababa
5. Where do the warlords get their guns from?  
a Kenya                      b Saudi Arabia                      c Yemen and Ethiopia

### **Somalia's fledgling security force / Xan Rice sees a glimmer of hope in the world's most lawless country as the first police cadets graduate**

An everyday scene in Somalia: a bloodied man lies dying under a tree. Then the rarest of scenes in the world's most lawless land: the police arrive. A white Toyota car screeches to a halt and half a dozen uniformed officers jump out. Three chase and tackle a suspect. The others cordon off the area and inspect the body. Holding a bloody axe found in a bush nearby, one declares: 'Exhibit one'.

This was a training exercise, one of the last before the 134 men and 19 women of the Armo Police Academy, in northern Somalia, graduated last month. They have become the first home-trained police in the country since it lapsed into anarchy 15 years ago.

'You are the beginning of hope for the Somali police,' said Bashir Jama, 52, the deputy police commissioner, addressing the cadets.

Hope is a word best used lightly in Somalia, a country not so much fractured as thoroughly broken. Since 1991, when the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown, there has been no central government. At least 13 attempts at forming one have failed. Outside the Somaliland region, which claims independence, there are no state schools, hospitals or social services. More than 400,000 people live in shacks as internal refugees. What control there is comes from warlords exploiting clan divisions for personal gain; what law there is comes from the barrel of an AK-47. 'We have one religion, one ethnicity, so we are one family, really,' said Abdinur Yusuf, 70, a senior policeman who is helping out at Armo. 'Our problem is that many people want to be head of that family.'

In the latest attempt at establishing a national government, clan elders elected the 275-member transitional federal government in October 2004. Led by Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the president, it is filled with most of the warlords who have helped to maintain the state of chaos for 15 years. But it does not control a single large city; it has no ministries and no revenue, and it relies on handouts.

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A country that once boasted of having the finest police force in sub-Saharan Africa now has just a few hundred proper officers and no army. The government has no way of securing its own safety, let alone that of the population. Which is why the establishment of a training academy to help rebuild a police force from scratch was seen as so urgent. Set in the small highway town of Armo, an hour's drive south of the Red Sea port of Bossaso, the academy was built last year with support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Training at the academy, led by three Ugandan police seconded to the UNDP, has ranged from recording crime in a logbook to a detailed study of the law of evidence. Given that the cadets were not trained with guns, because of an arms embargo since 1992, the 'alternative to violence procedures' course may prove the most useful. The trainers worry that the four-month course is too short. But there is little doubting the cadets' keenness. Andrew Kaweesi, 32, an assistant superintendent in the Ugandan police, said: 'The cadets who've never been in the militia are the easiest to teach. Some of the militia have bad morals . . . like taking money from people at roadblocks.'

But the recruitment of militia into the police and eventually the army is seen as unavoidable. With tens of thousands of young men working for private militias, the only way to encourage them to lay down their arms will be to offer them something else.

In the next few weeks about 100 of the Armo graduates will be flown to the government's base at Baidoa in central Somalia. There they will be joined by 200 other police officers who are being trained in Kenya; this will form the basis for what the government hopes will swell to a 12,000-strong force.

In Baidoa the officers will witness the challenges facing them across the country. At least 3,000 freelance militiamen roam the town and tensions are running high. Last month two guards escorting a World Food Programme convoy were killed near the town in a militia ambush. Seven men were killed after an argument over a mobile phone. But Baidoa might as well be Geneva compared with Mogadishu. Arguably the world's most dangerous capital for a foreigner, Mogadishu is a no-go zone also for the government. Two heavily armed groups are trying to gain control: a group of warlords/government ministers, who call themselves the Anti-Terror Coalition in a brazen attempt to get US support, are in conflict with the sharia courts, set up by the clan elders, and there are suspicions that they harbour Islamic extremists responsible for more than 12 assassinations in the past year.

What is certain is that both groups are awash with guns from Yemen and Ethiopia, and both strongly oppose the president's regime, which is thought likely to threaten their lucrative control of ports, airfields and roadblocks. 'If

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we sent these policemen there now, they would be killed,' said Garad Nur Abulle, the deputy head of the Armo academy. 'No doubt.'

### 3 Comprehension check

Decide whether these statements are *True* or *False* according to the information in the text.

1. There has been no central government in Somalia since 1991.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. There are no state schools, hospitals or social services in Somaliland.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Almost everyone in Somalia shares the same religion.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Somalia used to say it had the best police force in sub-Saharan Africa.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The new police academy is in Mogadishu.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. The trainers believe the training course is too long.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Mogadishu is much more dangerous than Baidoa.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The president's regime controls ports, airfields and roadblocks.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Vocabulary 1: Collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns in the right-hand column. Check your answers in the text:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. cordon off | a a government |
| 2. overthrow  | b divisions    |
| 3. elect      | c handouts     |
| 4. rely on    | d a challenge  |

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- |              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 5. lay down  | e an area            |
| 6. face      | f a dictator         |
| 7. exploit   | g a training academy |
| 8. establish | h arms               |

### 5 Vocabulary 2: Find the word

Find the words in the text:

- 1 A noun that means 'an object used as evidence in a court of law'. (paragraph 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 A phrasal verb that means 'to gradually change to a worse way of behaving'. (para. 2)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 A noun meaning 'the most senior members of a clan or tribe'. (para. 4)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 A two-word phrase meaning 'from a point where nothing has been done'. (para. 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 A noun meaning 'enthusiasm'. (para. 6)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 A verb meaning 'to increase in amount or number'. (para. 7)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 A three-word phrase meaning 'an area that is too dangerous to visit'. (para. 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 A two-word phrase meaning 'containing a lot or too much of something'. (para. 9)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 6 Vocabulary 3: Prepositions

What prepositions follow these words? Check your answers in the text:

1. lapse \_\_\_\_\_
2. attempt \_\_\_\_\_
3. filled \_\_\_\_\_
4. rely \_\_\_\_\_
5. boast \_\_\_\_\_
6. establishment \_\_\_\_\_
7. alternative \_\_\_\_\_
8. argument \_\_\_\_\_

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### 7 Discussion

Imagine your country without a police force or army. What would it be like? What would people do?