

# Somalia tops failed states

SOMALIA CONTINUED FROM P1

The eastern horn of Africa officially became the independent Democratic Republic of Somalia by shaking off Italian and British colonial rule in 1960.

In 1963, Somalia signed a military aid agreement with the Soviet Union and six years later the country's longest-standing president and military dictator, Muhammad Siad Barre, came to power in a military coup after the assassination of then-president Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke.

Siad Barre proclaimed Somalia a socialist state a year after gaining control. He then began nationalizing the country. He ruled based on his own version of "scientific socialism" that promoted self-reliance, modeled somewhat after China, the Soviet Union, and elements of the Quran.

In 1977, Somalia invaded the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and was defeated a year later after Soviet forces sided with Ethiopia. At this time, Somalia began drawing on support from the United States, and in 1980 signed an agreement allowing American military access to several Somalia ports.

While in theory Siad Barre's socialist ideology intended to minimize the divide among Somalia's different ethnic clans, his regime met with strong opposition from marginalized Mijertyn and Isaq starting in 1981.

The human rights abuses from Barre's harsh dealing with clan opposition drew criticism from the international community, and in 1989 the United States cut off military aid to Somalia.

By 1990 it was clear that Siad Barre was losing control of the country. He fled in 1991, leaving Somalia in chaos without centralized leadership. Several regions of the country formed their own governments, but Somalia has been in deep turmoil, and essentially lawless, ever since.

In 2000, neighbouring countries helped Somalia form a Transitional National Government (TNG) in an effort to bring stability.

Between 2006 and 2009, ongoing conflict between the TFG backed by Ethiopian forces, and



TOUGH STATE: A government soldier takes a rest after a shootout with hard-line Islamic fighters in Mogadishu, Somalia, last year. The annual Failed States Index announced on Monday that Somalia tops the list for a third consecutive year. MOHAMED DAHIR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

opposing armed militias led to a severe deterioration in humanitarian conditions.

The internal displacement monitoring centre estimates that 1.3 million of Somalia's 9.1 million people were displaced last year.

Many of the displaced live in camps with erratic food distribution, poor sanitation, and a lack of basic health care, according to a report by Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

In a 2009 report, MSF described the situation in Somalia as a "humanitarian catastrophe." The organization said it is extremely difficult to provide relief, due in part to the clash of political and aid agendas which have left certain clan leaders

suspicious of foreign aid, leading to attacks on aid workers.

In addition, piracy off the Somali coast has become the scourge of international shipping in the region. According to the International Maritime Organization, 11 piracy attacks occurred off Somalia's coast in the first quarter of 2008. Today, despite extensive efforts to patrol the waters, barely a day goes by without a piracy incident with ransom demands continuing to escalate into the multimillions.

Among the other top failed states are Zimbabwe (2), Sudan (3), Iraq (6), Pakistan (10), and Haiti (12).

# Iran bans two UN nuclear inspectors

By STEPHEN JONES  
Epoch Times Staff

DUBAI—Iran has banned two United Nations nuclear inspectors from entering the country amid allegations they had reported "false" information about the regime's disputed nuclear program.

Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, said the names of two inspectors had been handed over to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Those two now have no right to enter Iran anymore," he said on state TV. "What they reported was untrue."

The conflict comes after a report by the two inspectors claimed Iran had conducted experiments to purify uranium at the Jaber Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Research Laboratory in Tehran. The experiments could theoretically be used to create a nuclear warhead.

Iran denied the allegations, and when the inspectors visited the site again in May the equipment had been removed.

Their concerns were released in a report in May. However, Salehi said that the inspectors had released the report without IAEA approval.

The U.N. agency released a statement on Monday saying that it had full confidence in the two inspectors.

"The agency confirms that its report on the implementation of safeguards in Iran, issued on May 31, is fully accurate," spokesman Greg Webb said in a statement.

"The IAEA has full confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of the inspectors concerned."

Also at issue is the scope of U.N. inspections in Iran. The country is a signatory to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, but officials are keen to emphasize the limits of that in terms of the scope of inspections.



DEFIANT: Iran's atomic chief Ali Akbar Salehi (R) sits in Parliament in Tehran on Dec. 1, 2009.

ATTA KENARE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Salehi, for example, says that inspectors were not allowed to visit nuclear sites without warning.

"[The U.N.] inspections should be thoroughly within the nonproliferation treaty," he said on Monday.

He added that Iran was not a signatory to an additional protocol that allows unlimited inspections.

The U.N. Security Council recently implemented a fourth round of sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program.

Russia, a veto-wielding member of the council, agreed to the U.S.-led sanctions despite being a close economic ally with Iran.

On Monday, Iran attempted to drive a wedge between the two former superpowers, by claiming the U.S.-planned defense shield in Europe was less against protecting Western countries from a possible attack by the Islamic Republic and more about isolating Russia.

Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi said the missile shield was an attempt by the United States to "expand its domination over Europe, and to find an excuse not to dismantle its nuclear weapons stationed in the region, while putting pressure on Russia and surrounding it."

# Israel to ease Gaza restrictions, details still vague

By GENEVIEVE LONG  
Epoch Times Staff

JERUSALEM—Answering to intense international pressure regarding Gaza restrictions, Israel gave further details of its plan to ease restrictions on the region after a Security Cabinet Meeting on Sunday.

Under the new regulations more goods—but not weapons—will be allowed to enter Gaza.

"Our government's policy towards Gaza is clear," Prime Minister Netanyahu was quoted as saying on his website. "Israel seeks to keep out of Gaza weapons and war-supporting material that Hamas uses to prepare and carry out terror and rocket attacks against Israel and its civilians."

Netanyahu made the comments during a meeting with Quartet Envoy Tony Blair. How the changes will be implemented have not been decided.

Items prohibited from entering Gaza will include weapons and war material, including "problematic dual-use items," according to Netanyahu's office. Anything not on the prohibited list will be allowed into Gaza.

Restrictions on dual-use construction materials will also be eased for

the Palestinian authority-authorized projects such as schools, health facilities, water, and sanitation. The projects must be carried out under international supervision. Projects like a U.N. housing development will be able to get more material, and the Israeli government has promised to accelerate approval for similar projects.

Operations at land crossings now in use will be expanded to process more goods. After expanding capacity at existing crossings, more crossings will be opened.

People trying to enter and exit Gaza for humanitarian and medical reasons, including staff of international aid organizations, will have a streamlined permit process. Israel is also promising to eventually find more ways to facilitate movement of people, if conditions in the area improve.

Goods bound for Gaza through the Port of Ashdod, one of Israel's main ports, will continue to be handled by Israel in what they call "expeditious inspection and delivery of goods."

Despite the easing of restrictions, the government is emphasizing that it still considers Hamas a terrorist organization, and vowed the Israeli military will continue working against it.

The White House applauded Israel's move, saying in a statement on Sunday that the U.S. believes it should "significantly improve conditions for Palestinians in Gaza, while preventing the entry of weapons."

"There is no need for unnecessary confrontations, and we call on all parties to act responsibly in meeting the needs of the people of Gaza," the statement said.

Obama will discuss Israel's new policy and additional steps with Netanyahu during his visit to Washington on July 6, said the White House.

The Israeli government is also seizing the moment to dovetail the easing of restrictions with a call for the international community to help release kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held captive for almost four years in Gaza.

"The international community should join Israel in strongly condemning Hamas for holding him captive," said Netanyahu in his comments during his meeting with Tony Blair.

"We will redouble our efforts to secure his freedom," Blair said. Obama also demanded Shalit's immediate release.



EASED RESTRICTIONS: A truck arrives with goods for the Gaza Strip on the border between Gaza and Israel. URIEL SINAI/GETTY IMAGES

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