

Norwegian-Somali Relations

*An exploration of Norway's relations to Somalia
from 1960 to 1994*

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Master's thesis
History

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, Norway has engaged in international development aid and developing countries have sought development aid from Norway. Norway was and is a small country and at the start of its involvement in international development aid had very limited resources. A select few countries was chosen as partner countries where Norway focused its aid.

Many countries wanted to establish a partnership with Norway in the first decades of Norwegian development aid, but did not get chosen. One of these countries was Somalia.

Things have changed since the 1960s and currently Somalia is a partner country. However Norwegian interest and engagement in Somalia from 1960 and until 1993 has not been researched. Recent Norwegian white papers tell of bilateral relations between Norway and Somalia ever since Somalia's independence.

This thesis explores and elaborates on Norwegian-Somali relations in this period and finds that Norway did not have any significant interest in Somalia.

For the first decade of Somalia's existence as an independent state, Norway barely gave Somalia any thought. From 1972 until 1993, Norway kept Somalia at arm's length and rejected any requests from Somalia for direct bilateral development aid. However, Norway did contribute humanitarian aid earlier than what is currently thought.

Aside from a lukewarm Norwegian attitude towards Somalia, the thesis goes into why Somalia was not chosen as a partner country in the 1970s and explore the possibility that Somalia could be a representative case to show how Norway interacted with countries that sought partnership with Norway but got rejected.

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I wish to thank my main supervisor Hilde H. Waage for her guidance and support throughout this journey of mine. I don't think I could have asked for a better mentor to write this master's thesis.

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I wish to thank my family for their moral support and financial support that ultimately has allowed me to pursue this master's.

I wish to thank my fellow students who has helped me with feedback on my writings which has helped me explore my thesis in more ways I could have thought of myself.

A little nod to Mazz and Dent is in order.

Key terms

Accreditation, the action of officially recognising someone as having a particular status or being qualified to perform a particular activity.

Aid activity, aid projects and programmes, cash transfers, deliveries of goods, training courses, research projects, debt relief operations and contributions to NGO's.

Bilateral, involving two parties, especially countries

Consul, formal, non-diplomatic representative for a foreign state, usually located in a country's capital

De facto, in fact, whether by right or not.

De jure, according to rightful entitlement or claim, by right

Delegation, a body of delegates or representatives; a deputation

Disbursement, release of funds to or the purchase of goods or services for a recipient; by extension, the amount thus spent.

Dossier, a collection of documents about a particular person, event, or subject

Honorary consul, non-paid consul, commonly selected among residents of the host nation, can also be citizens of the foreign government.

Imputed Multilateral Aid/Flows, method to calculate geographical distribution of donor's core contribution to multilateral agencies.

Irredentism, a policy of advocating the restoration to a country of any territory formerly belonging to it.

Multilateral, having members or contributors from several groups, especially several different countries

Official Development Assistance (ODA), resource flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral agencies.

Side accreditation, an ambassador's accreditation to another state other than the one they reside in.

Technical Co-operation, grants to nationals of aide recipient countries receiving education or training at home or abroad.

Abbreviations

DAC, Development Assistance Committee
ECN, The Export Council of Norway
EEC, European Economic Committee
FAO, Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
GSL, Greater Somalia League
ITC, International Trade Center
LDC, Least Developed Countries
MFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOD, Marehan-Ogaadeen-Dulbahante clans
MSA, Most Severely Affected
NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO, non-governmental organisation
NMFA, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norad, Norwegian Agency for International Development
OAU, Organisation of African Unity
ODA, Official Development Assistance
OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRC, People's Republic of China
SNL, Somali National League
SNM, Somali National Movement
Somalia, Somali Republic (1960-1969), Somali Democratic Republic (1969-1991)
SRC, Supreme Revolutionary Council
SRSP, Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party

SSDF, Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSF, Somali Salvation Front
SYL, Somali Youth League
UN, United Nations
UNDP, United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO, United Nations Disaster Relief Office
UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US, United States of America
USP, United Somali Party
USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WSLF, Western Somalia Liberation Front

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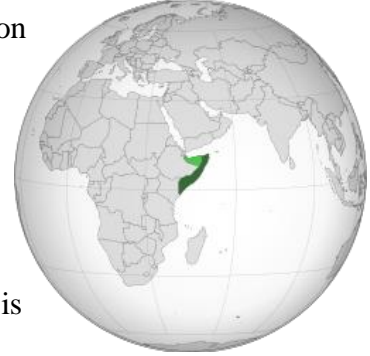
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Somalia is a federal republic in Eastern Africa in the region known as the Horn of Africa. Its capital is Mogadishu, and has a population of more than 16 million inhabitants. Its national day is 1 July, and its national currency is the Somali Shilling.¹ It is, as of 2021, ranked as the fifth poorest country in the world. Seventy per cent of the population is under thirty years old, and life expectancy is approximately fifty years. There is an illiteracy rate of 38 per cent.² The political situation is tense, as two regions reject governance from the government in the capital of Mogadishu. The region of Somaliland declared itself independent after the breakout of the civil war in 1991.



Picture 1, Somalia marked in dark green, Somaliland marked in light green. Source Wikipedia, creative commons

However, the state of Somaliland remains unrecognised by the international community. The region of Puntland in northeastern Somalia considers itself an autonomous region within the state of Somalia.³

Since the Norwegian participation in the UN-mandated operations in 1990, Norway has increased its engagement in Somalia. Currently, Somalia is one of Norway's main partner countries for stabilisation and conflict prevention, and Norway has disbursed NOK 3.9 billion in aid from 2012 to 2020.⁴ Somalis are, to date, the most prominent African migrant group in Norway, and Norwegian citizens with Somali backgrounds are becoming more visible in the political landscape within Norway and internationally. From 2017 to 2020, the Norwegian citizen Hassan Ali Khaire served as Prime Minister in Somalia.⁵ Marian Hussein became the first Norwegian citizen with a Somali background to serve in the Norwegian Parliament, first

¹ 'Somalia', accessed 21 March 2022, <https://www.fn.no/Land/somalia>.

² 'Somalia', Norad, accessed 21 March 2022, <https://norad.no/landsider/afrika/somalia/>.

³ <http://www.puntlandgovt.com/puntland-state-of-somalia/>

⁴ <https://resultater.norad.no>

⁵ 'Parliament Unanimously Endorses Hassan Khaire as New PM', *Goobjoog News English* (blog), 1 March 2017, <https://goobjoog.com/english/parliament-unanimously-endorses-hassan-khaire-new-pm/>; 'Somalia PM Hassan Khaire Resigns after No-Confidence Vote', *The East African*, 28 July 2020, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somalia-pm-hassan-khaire-resigns-after-no-confidence-vote--1906268>.

as a deputy member from 2017 until 2020, then as a full member.⁶

The link between Norway and Somalia seems to become more significant, and it is interesting to look back on the history of the Norwegian-Somali connection. As Somalia is currently one of the main partner countries to receive Norwegian development aid, it is natural to look at the connection from the perspective of aid policy. In 2018, the Norwegian government presented a white paper to the Norwegian parliament, the Storting, that outlined Norway's policy concerning relations and engagement in partner countries. The white paper states that Norway has had bilateral relations with Somalia since its independence in 1960. In the 1990s, Norway increased its aid efforts due to the civil war, state collapse and natural disasters in Somalia.⁷ The white paper leaves a thirty-year gap in information.

In Norwegian aid historiography, the three-volume series *Norsk utviklingshjelps historie* is widely considered the foundation of aid history.⁸ Reading through the three volumes on aid history that details Norway's engagement in developing countries throughout the decades, what is intriguing is not necessarily all the things that are written. Instead, it is the things that are not written. One of the volumes mentions Somalia, but only barely.⁹

This thesis aims to explore and elaborate on the different interactions between Norway and Somalia, Norwegians and Somalis, from Somalia's independence in 1960 until its collapse in 1991. In which ways did Norway interact with Somalia in this period? How did Norwegians interact with Somalis and Somalia? Was Norway involved in any significant aid activity concerning Somalia?

⁶ 'Marian (32) er den første med hijab på Stortinget: – Jeg håper det gjør at vi får flere som tør å bryte barrierer', accessed 14 March 2022, <https://www.aftenposten.no/amagasinet/i/kJBKjX/marian-32-er-den-foerste-med-hijab-paa-stortinget-jeg-haaper-det-gjoe>.

⁷ Meld. St. 17 «Partnerland i Utviklingspolitikken»: 33

⁸ Jarle Simensen, *1952-1975: Norge møter den tredje verden*, vol. 1 (Bergen: Fagbokforl, 2003); Arild Engelsen Ruud and Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland, *1975-1989: vekst, velvilje og utfordringer*, vol. 2, *Norsk utviklingshjelps historie* (Bergen: Fagbokforl, 2003); Frode Liland and Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland, *1989-2002: på bred front*, vol. 3 (Bergen: Fagbokforl, 2003).

⁹ Liland and Kjerland, *1989-2002*, 3:100.

Modern Development Aid

The main object of discussion between representatives from Somalia and Norway was development aid. Somalia sought to make Norway a contributor of development aid to Somalia, whereas Norway had a clear strategy to concentrate aid to a small number of selected countries.

What is development aid? It is not a clear-cut topic as aid comes in many forms, and the terminology in the field of development aid often seems to be used interchangeably. The different forms of aid are numerous. “Aid” or “assistance” are considered the general terms that include all forms of assistance from a donor country to a recipient country. The three main aid flows are multilateral, bilateral, and multi-bi aid. *Multilateral aid* is generally when a donor country gives to an international organization for that organization’s purpose, *bilateral aid* is when a donor country gives aid grants directly to a recipient country, and *multi-bi aid* is when aid grants are given to multilateral organizations but are earmarked for specific projects in a recipient country. There are some nuances to aid, aside from these three categories. There is a difference between humanitarian aid and development aid in aid terminology. For the most part, humanitarian aid is disaster relief or short-term aid to a crisis, whereas development aid is long-term projects and programmes. Sometimes humanitarian aid is considered part of development aid. The overarching aid concept also includes loans that are favourable to the recipient.¹⁰

One of the findings in this thesis is that there was a relatively low contribution of development aid from Norway to Somalia. Therefore, to elaborate further on the Norwegian-Somali connection, a more fitting term to use is *aid activity*. The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines aid activity as including “projects and programmes, cash transfers, deliveries of goods, training courses, research projects, debt-relief operations and contributions to non-governmental organisations.”¹¹

However, the most common way to evaluate donor contributions to recipients is Official Development Assistance (ODA), which are resource flows to countries on the OECD’s DAC list of ODA Recipients. The DAC, or Development Assistance Committee, is the OECD committee that deals with cooperation matters. Norway is part of this committee.¹²

¹⁰ <https://www.oecd.org/development/dac-glossary.htm>

¹¹ https://www.oecd.org/development/dac-glossary.htm#Aid_Activity

¹² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/development-assistance-committee/>

The emergence of modern development aid is firmly rooted in the Cold War and Post-World War II. In 1948, the US launched the European Recovery program, known as the Marshall Plan, to strengthen its relations with Western European countries in an effort to contain the USSR's influence.¹³ The US initially offered the Marshall Plan to all European countries. However, the USSR expressly forbade its closest neighbours in Eastern Europe from accepting the Marshall aid.¹⁴

Following the US initiative, the United Nations (UN) set up the Extended Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) in 1949 to amalgamate donor funds for technical assistance for distribution through UN agencies. EPTA was an antecedent to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁵ In the 1950s, the US was responsible for 60 per cent to 85 per cent of all development aid channelled through the UN. Throughout the 1950s, more countries started to experiment with their own initiatives in foreign aid by.¹⁶

In 1960, the Development Assistance Group (DAG) formed as a platform for the major aid donors to consult each other on assistance to “less-developed countries”. In the same year, the Organisation for European Economic Development was succeeded by the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD). The DAG was reconstituted into the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) the following year.¹⁷ The reorganisation of these groups saw the inclusion of the US and Canada, which reflected the pressure from the US to share the burdens of aid among Western donors.¹⁸ Parallel to these institutional developments, The World Bank set up the International Development Association (IDA) to provide soft loans to the poorest developing countries. In 1961, and the rest of the decade, Western states established agencies and departments to manage and administer aid.¹⁹

¹³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Kindle (Cambridge: University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵ Helmut Führer, ‘The Story of Official Development Assistance: A History of the Development Assistance Committee and the Development Co-Operation Directorate in Dates, Names and Figures’ (OECD, 1996), 5.

¹⁶ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:37.

¹⁷ Führer, ‘The Story of Official Development Assistance’, 6.

¹⁸ Helge Pharo, ‘Altruism, Security and the Impact of Oil: Norway’s Foreign Economic Assistance Policy, 1958–1971’, *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (November 2003): 528, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777303001401>.

¹⁹ Führer, ‘The Story of Official Development Assistance’, 13.

New International Economic Order

After the general decolonisation in the 1950s, newly decolonised countries that gained political sovereignty felt that they had not achieved economic independence. Instead, these countries felt still economically colonised, even if not politically. In 1964, the recently established United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the 77-Group, a coalition of the developing countries, worked towards achieving a more equitable international system. The UNCTAD and 77-Group held conferences, and in these conferences, they laid the foundation for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) concept. The sentiment came from an understanding that trade was more important for development than aid. Developing countries did not have control of the pricing of goods they needed to sell. The 77-Group countries wanted better terms for trade with first-world industrialised countries instead of foreign development aid.²⁰ One of the NIEO's leading detractors was the US, which tried to rally Western donors in opposition to the UNCTAD's agenda by exerting influence through the DAC.²¹

For ten years, the 77-Group countries were unsuccessful in their mission. However, in 1974, the 77-Group demanded action in the UN and their demands were met with an action plan aiming toward a new international economic order.²²

²⁰ Antony Anghie, 'Inequality, Human Rights, and the New International Economic Order', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 10, no. 3 (2019): 431–32, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2019.0016>.

²¹ Pharo, 'Altruism, Security and the Impact of Oil', 539.

²² Randi Rønning Balsvik, *Norsk Bistandshistorie*, Utsyn&innsikt (Norge: Det Norske Samlaget, 2016), 63.

Norwegian Development Aid and Foreign Policy

Since its independence in 1905, Norway led a neutrality policy in foreign relations until World War II. However, due to post-WW2 insecurity stemming from the emerging Cold War, Norway decided to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949 (NATO). Participation in NATO became the most crucial factor in deciding Norway's security policy. Furthermore, Norway's participation in the UN heavily influenced Norway's foreign policy. Norway's policy papers referred almost dogmatically to the UN as "a cornerstone" of Norway's foreign policy. Another major aspect of Norwegian policy was Scandinavian cooperation.²³

Norwegian foreign development aid started with a fishery project in Kerala, India, in 1952 and with grants to the UN EPTA in the 1950s.²⁴ EPTA became a platform for connecting Norwegians and the third world. The UN EPTA program sent out a plethora of technical experts to third world countries. Approximately 250 Norwegian experts served under the UN Mandate from 1955 until 1960.²⁵ From this modest start, Norway entered international aid politics and engagement.

The early discourse on aid policy in and outside parliament was turbulent. However, the principles that would guide Norwegian development aid were more systematically formulated entering the 1960s.²⁶ The UN's strategy for development in the 1960s heavily influenced Norway's aid policy. Likewise did Norway's participation in DAC, which Norway joined in 1962. Norway did not join as an initial member of DAG or DAC in 1960 and 1961, as the government of Norway believed that aid matters should be dealt with within the UN framework. However, when it became clear that the DAC had a key role in discussing and coordinating Western aid policies, Norway changed its position and joined the DAC.²⁷

Because of the Kerala project and a smaller one in Korea, most of the aid in the 1950s was bilateral. There came a change in the 1970s when the principle of equal distribution between

²³ Olav Stokke, *International Development Assistance: Policy Drivers and Performance* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 123, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-06219-4>.

²⁴ Olav Stokke, *Norsk utviklingsbistand: målsettinger og retningslinjer for kanaliseringen : bistandsstrukturen, Norbok*, Nordiska afrikainstitutets bistandsstudier 1 (Uppsala: Nordiska afrikainstitutet, 1975), 35.

²⁵ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:38.

²⁶ Stokke, *Norsk utviklingsbistand*, 35.

²⁷ Pharo, 'Altruism, Security and the Impact of Oil', 538–39.

bilateral and multilateral aid was confirmed. Different governments later kept to this principle.²⁸ However, as table 1 shows, more went to bilateral aid in practice.

Table 1 "Norwegian Development Aid, 1962-1985" in mill. NOK²⁹

	1962	1965	1970	1975	1980	1983	1985
Total aid	37	85	263	986	2331	4362	4946
Percentage of GNP	0,14	0,16	0,33	0,66	0,85	1,06	1,00
Bilateral percentage	25,7	33,5	39,2	55,4	57,5	56,9	53,8
Multilateral percentage	74,3	66,8	60,8	42,5	42,5	43,1	46,2

Another important principle was the geographical concentration of development aid to a few selected countries. This principle was to ensure that development aid had a more significant effect than it might have if distributed to a larger number of developing countries. The reasoning for this principle was that Norway was a small nation with limited experience and resources.³⁰ The selected countries, the main cooperation countries, very few in number, received the bulk of the bilateral aid, but not everything. Even though white papers and debates in parliament repeatedly confirmed that the principle of geographically concentrated aid should lead Norwegian development aid through both the 1970s and 1980s, different governments made a multitude of exemptions. Historians Arild Engelsen Ruud and Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland argue that the principle of concentration was initially about directing aid to the main cooperation countries, but in the 1980s, the understanding of the principle concerned regions in addition to the main cooperation countries.³¹ The principle of geographical concentration was not adhered to in reality; this was especially the case after 1975.³²

²⁸ Stokke, *Norsk utviklingsbistand*, 45.

²⁹ Ruud and Kjerland, *1975-1989*, 2:251.

³⁰ Rolf Tamnes, *Oljealder: 1965-1995*, vol. 6, Norsk utenrikspolitikk historie (Oslo: Universitetsforl, 1997), 401, http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2014061308041.

³¹ Ruud and Kjerland, *1975-1989*, 2:229–30.

³² Tamnes, *Oljealder*, 6:401.

Methodology

In researching this topic, some obvious challenges arose. When researching a bilateral relationship, it is logical to consult sources that would detail both perspectives. However, in the case of Somalia, this is close to impossible. The current state of Somali archival material is one of disarray; there are no formal centralized archive institutions for historical documents and government records.³³ In a digital text message received from the Somali National Archives, it was confirmed that probably all historical records from before 1991 were destroyed and that if there are any, they are in unknown private hands. Due to conflict and instability in the region, the Somali National Archives in Mogadishu are not available physically or linguistically. I do not speak Somali, and conditions for access to the archives are unknown. Furthermore, the Somali National Archives are mostly a collection of audio recordings of music, famous poetry and political speeches.³⁴

Another issue is that the historical connection between Somalia and Norway has not been researched in any depth by historians, leaving this project with little to no secondary sources to help explain the Norwegian-Somali connection. These factors leave out the possibility of uncovering the Somali perspective on Norway, and the project will not have the luxury of existing secondary sources. Thus, this thesis relies on archival material detailing the Norwegian perspective and extrapolation from relevant but topically lacking secondary sources. However, even though it is impossible to give an account of Somali perspective on Norway, it is still possible to chronicle the interactions between Somalia and Norway.

Therefore, this thesis bases itself primarily on archival material from Norwegian archives. Most of the archival material originates from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (NMFA) dossiers from 1960 until 1994 and details some of the interactions between Norway and Somalia. There are possibly gaps in between the interactions that the NMFA documented, as there could have been unofficial conversations and interactions that they did not document.

Due to restrictions on archive access, this project will not be able to document diplomatic interaction between Norway and the Somali government after 1989.

³³ Patricia C. Franks and Anthony Bernier, *The International Directory of National Archives* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 348.

³⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/09/20129454718676998.html>

Summary of Chapters

In this chapter, I clarified the relevant terminology of development aid, and elaborated on the context of Norwegian development aid policy.

Chapter 2 outlines the historical context of Somalia, and elaborate on Somalia's history from its independence in 1960 to the emerging domestic issues that led to Somalia's state collapse in 1991. In chapter 2, we find that Somalia was a fragmented nation that had a volatile democracy that only survived for nine years before Siad Barre came to power and made Somalia a *de facto* dictatorship. The chapter further outlines the significant events of this period and the international relations of Somalia during Siad Barre's reign. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the connection between Somalia and the world's superpowers, The United States of America (US) and the United Socialist Soviet Republic(USSR).

Chapter 3 presents a chronological series of interactions between Norway and Somalia from 1960 to 1979, based on archival material. These interactions show that Norway, as an emerging international aid actor, was reluctant to establish an extensive diplomatic presence in Somalia due to Norway's foreign aid policy and lack of political prospects. At first, this reluctance was due to an almost non-existent relationship between Norway and Somalia and no commercial interests of note. The chapter introduces the reader to Arne Bjørgung, the main driving force to make Norway engage more in Somalia in the 1960s, and finds that beyond a few shipping companies, he did not succeed. The main focal point of the chapter is Norway's increased diplomatic interaction with Somalia and Norway's attitude towards Somalia concerning the Ogaden war. The chapter ends with a look at Norway's emerging multilateral engagement in Somalia.

Chapter 4 presents Norway's interactions with Somalia in the 1980s and finds that aside from procedural formalities and a few visits from delegations, Norway did not interact significantly with Somalia. The chapter instead focuses more on Norway's multilateral interactions with non-state actors. Furthermore, the chapter shows how Norway increased their financial engagement in Somalia and ends with a look at Norway's response to Somali refugees and the Somali civil war after the overthrow of Siad Barre.

Chapter 5 endeavours to take a more critical look at Norway's interaction with Somalia to elaborate on Norway's reluctance to deal with Somalia and the rationale behind it. The chapter

draws some comparisons to other situations and categorises Somalia as a representative case of how Norway dealt with countries that were not chosen as partner countries from 1960 to 1990. The finding is that there were no compelling commercial interests for Norway in Somalia and that there were not any individuals with enough influence to sway Norwegian policy in favour of cooperation with Somalia. Another factor that likely played into this reluctance was that the US and the USSR's extensive struggle for influence in Somalia, made Somalia a matter too volatile for Norway.

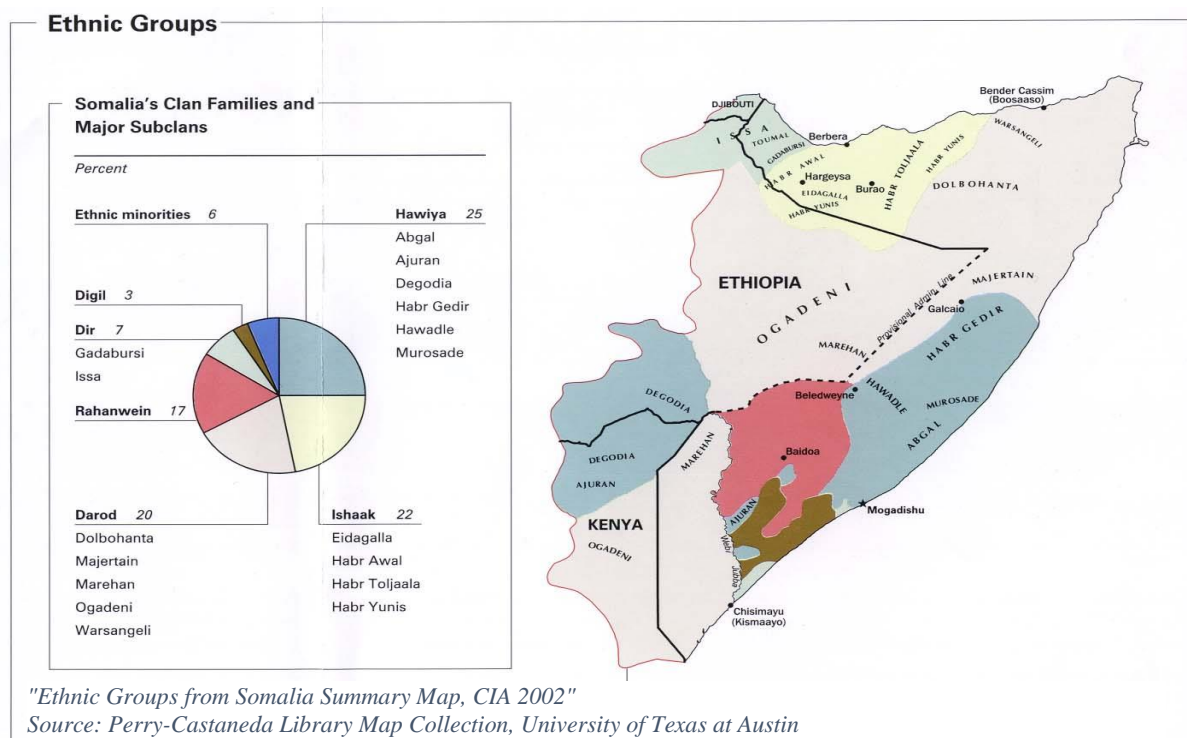
Chapter 6 presents some concluding points on the findings of the thesis. The main point is that Norway did have bilateral relations with Somalia since 1960, but that the relations between Somalia and Norway is characterised by Norway's reluctance to deal with and aid Somalia on a direct bilateral level from 1972 onwards. Before 1972, there was simply no interest in Somalia or diplomatic interaction.

Chapter 2

The Road Through independence, Global Politics, Famine and War

From the early twentieth century up to 1941, Somalia was under colonial rule. The British colonised Northern Somalia, or Somaliland, while the Italians colonised southern and central Somalia. From 1941 to 1950, Somalia in its entirety was ruled by a British military administration. After this, southern and central Somalia was administrated by Italy through a UN trusteeship, and Somaliland stayed a British protectorate until 1960. When Somalia became independent in 1960, and the two territories were reunited under the Somali Republic, Somalia was governed through multi-party democracy. From 1969 to 1991, Siad Barre ruled Somalia through his idea of "revolutionary scientific socialism". When Barre was overthrown in 1991, it marked the start of civil war and state collapse.³⁵

A central aspect of Somali culture, politics, and history is the clan system. Somalis are commonly divided into five major clans; Darod, Isaaq, Hawiye, Dir and Rahanweyn. This clan system has considerably impacted the course of Somali history, as many conflicts can be



³⁵ Ken Menkhaus, 'Calm between the Storms? Patterns of Political Violence in Somalia, 1950–1980', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 560.

attributed to clan differences. In the north, Somaliland has mainly been populated by the Isaaq clan and the Dir, with a small pocket of Darod in the eastern part of Somaliland. The Darod clan has traditionally populated the Puntland region in northeast and Southern Somalia. Central Somalia has been divided between the Hawiye, Rahanweyn and the minor clan of Digil, with small pockets of Dir near the coast.³⁶

These clan divisions have coloured the political landscape significantly. In 1960 at the cusp of independence, the four major parties were the Somali National League (SNL), the United Somali Party (USP), Somali Youth League (SYL) and Greater Somalia League (GSL). The northern SNL and USP were mostly clan-based parties, where SNL represented the Isaaq, and the northern Dir and Darod supported USP. At unification, the Darod joined their southern clan-family in the SYL, and the Dir were pulled more towards traditional ties to the Hawiye and regional ties to the Isaaq. The southern party GSL, which was pro-Arab and militantly pan-Somalist, garnered support from SNL and USP in opposition to SYL, which were considered more of a moderate party on the issue of Greater Somalia.³⁷



Colonial Borders of Somalia before 1960 Independence

From the onset of the 1960 independence, colonial differences between Somaliland and Somalia, stemming from the British and Italians operating with and leaving behind differing administrative, structural, education and legislation systems, gave rise to challenges in the process of actual integration and unification. According to ethnographer and historian Ioan M. Lewis, these challenges were made more difficult by the British and Italian technical advisors that stayed after independence. Due to their strong attachment to their respective

systems, they hindered rather than facilitated integration.³⁸

³⁶ I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, 4th ed. (Ohio: James Currey, 2002), 5–7.

³⁷ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 168–69.

³⁸ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 170-71.

Despite the difficulties of integration and unification and ample breeding grounds for conflict, the multi-party democracy period was relatively uneventful compared to other African countries. "The Vibrant multi-party democracy of the 1960s gave Somalis voice through political parties and representatives, reducing the need for protest movements [...]", even though clan and political conflict did arise at certain times, but without any significant political violence, political scientist Ken Menkhaus claims.³⁹

Aside from a tumultuous but relatively non-violent domestic experience, the Somali Republic's irredentist agenda, *irredentism* being a territorial claim on a national, ethnic, or historical basis, led to them providing support to armed Somali insurgents in northern Kenya, who sought to break from Kenya and join the Somali Republic.⁴⁰

The Republic also initiated various border skirmishes with Ethiopia due to the eastern part of Ethiopia, known as Ogaden, mainly being populated by Somalis. In 1962 Somalia, in their quest to unite Somalis on the Horn of Africa under one state, sought Western military aid, and the US, Italy and West Germany gave the Republic an offer of \$10 million and a supply force of 5,000-6,000 soldiers meant to help with internal security functions. For this aid, Somalia would have to turn down other offers of military assistance, meaning that Somalia turned down the offer from the West instead.

The modesty of the Western offer reflected concerns that the Somalis would use their military force against western clients, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia. Since this was precisely what the Somalis had in mind, it should have come as no surprise when the Somalis rejected the Western offer and accepted a more generous Soviet alternative.⁴¹

The "First Five-Year Plan", 1963-1967

Following the independence, the Five-Year Plan of 1963 was the first attempt at social and economic development without any facts to base it on. Without information on Somali GNP, the plan was to spend 1,400 million Somali Shillings on developing industry and many aspects

³⁹ Menkhaus, 'Calm between the Storms?', 564–65.

⁴⁰ Menkhaus, 'Calm between the Storms?', 565.

⁴¹ Steven David, 'Realignment in the Horn: The Soviet Advantage', *International Security* 4, no. 2 (1979): 72, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2626744>.

of infrastructure. The Plan did not infer any major land developments benefitting the nomadic population, and very little of the budget was allocated for settlement. In general, the Plan was cautious in nature as to not disturb and incite issues with the nomad's traditional way of life. The Five-Year Plan was to rely almost entirely on foreign grants and loans. Already Somalia was receiving funds from the United Arab Republic⁴², the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and others, with contributions expected to increase. More aid was expected from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Kuwait.

Furthermore, many international agencies, i.a., the World Bank, contributed to the Plan. However, the 1964-67 period saw many hardships and crises, including famine and border conflict with Ethiopia, the latter leading the Somali government to re-allocate funds from the plan to military spending. Somalia's foreign policy agenda regarding Northern Kenya eventually led to the government breaking diplomatic ties with Britain, which stopped British budgetary aid to Somalia. The PRC stepped in to offset the loss of British aid the first year with a grant but did not continue aid the following year. Italy's annual budgetary aid for 1963-1964 was late due to domestic political circumstances, and together with the obstacles mentioned before, it made it more difficult. Later in 1964 and after, the Republic received aid from the EEC and West Germany. Also, they finally received the aid promised from Italy. However, due to the closing of the Suez Canal in 1967, the Republic's banana export declined severely. All this back and forth ultimately limited the potential of the Plan. In 1968, the government launched a two-year "Short-Term Development Programme", which was supposed to consolidate the work of the previous Plan, but in the end, it met much of the same setbacks as the Plan. Furthermore, charges of widespread corruption marred the Plan. The Programme was discontinued in 1969 after the coup.⁴³

⁴² The United Arab republic was a union between Egypt and Syria lasting from 1958 to 1961, with Egypt keeping the name until 1971.

⁴³ Ozay Mehmet, 'Effectiveness of Foreign Aid—the Case of Somalia', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 1 (1971): 33–36.

Somalia and the Soviet Connection

The Soviets initially gave the Republic a loan of \$32 million, later raised to \$55 million, which was used to train and equip a force of 14,000 Somali soldiers. Nevertheless, from 1962 to 1969, the Soviets limited their actual aid to Somalia, reflecting their caution and Somali lack of capacity to receive aid effectively. This state of affairs changed significantly in 1969.⁴⁴

Since the National Assembly general elections in March of 1969, the government, with Prime Minister Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Igal and President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke at the head, was increasingly criticised by opponents and critics outside the Assembly of corruption and nepotism. In the elections, Somalia had effectively become a one-party state because when SYL was expected to win most of the seats, many politicians left other opposition parties in favour of SYL to secure their interests. The more disillusioned critics of the Assembly saw the development in the Assembly as democracy lapsing "[...] into commercialised anarchy [...]", and the Premier's and President's response "[...] was to adopt a dangerously high-handed and authoritarian style of rule which added to their unpopularity."⁴⁵

This state of affairs changed, however. President Shermarke was assassinated by his bodyguard while visiting the drought-stricken area of Las Anod in October of 1969. After the assassination of the President, Premier Igal quickly held elections to ensure that his close associate Haji Muse Boqor was elected President. This move was Premier Igal's attempt to ensure his re-appointment as Premier. Some army officials decided to act and led a coup against the government. Amongst others, the military junta was led by Mohamed Siad Barre. The coup led to the suspension of the constitution, abolishment of the Supreme Court, closing of the National Assembly, political parties declared illegal, and the establishment of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) and the reinvention of Somalia as the Somali Democratic Republic (Somalia).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ David, 'Realignment in the Horn', 72.

⁴⁵ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 206.

⁴⁶ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 206.

Shortly after the coup, Barre became the head of the SRC, where the clans were not equally represented. Two-fifths of the Council were members of Barre's clan, the Darod, whereas the



Mohamed Siad Barre
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Hawiye had six members, the Isaaq had four, the Dir one, and two non-clan members. Three of the Hawiye members were removed from the council within a year. The government became increasingly based on clan affiliation, and the list of officials mainly consisted of members of the Darod clan.⁴⁷

Perhaps the most impactful decision of Barre was to distance Somalia from the Western world, in particular, to have the United States at arm's length. The U.S. Peace Corps was evicted, and diplomatic ties to North Vietnam was established, allowing their ships to fly a Somali *flag of convenience*. Furthermore, Barre's Government publicly acknowledged East Germany, antagonising West Germany

as could be expected. These decisions actively halted aid from Western sources, and Barre became increasingly reliant on Eastern aid.⁴⁸

Siad Barre ensured Soviet bloc affiliation in 1970 when Barre marketed the Somali Democratic Republic to be a socialist state to the Soviets, declaring Soviet-style socialism to be the guiding principle of the state. In 1971, Barre paid his first visit to Moscow, and in 1974 the relationship between Barre and the Soviets was consolidated by the official declaration of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation after Soviet president Nikolai Podgorny had paid a visit to Somalia.⁴⁹

By all accounts, Somalia seemed to flourish from 1970. The Somali Revolutionary Council, the governing body, implemented rural and urban literacy programs successfully and established large-scale public works programs.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the council joined the Arab League in 1974,

⁴⁷ Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia: The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969–1991* (UPA, 2016), 69–74.

⁴⁸ Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia*, 76.

⁴⁹ Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia*, 83–85.

⁵⁰ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 216.

and Barre served as the chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) the same year.

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A significant setback for Somalia and the rest of the Sahel region came with the 1973-1975 *Dabadheer*⁵² drought, one of the worst in Somali history, that left over 200,000 nomads destitute. This drought, however, coincided with the SRC's plans. The SRC wanted to detribalise the nomads and make them sedentary. At first, the SRC changed the development campaign in the rural areas into a famine relief operation to respond to the drought, but in a short time, they converted the famine relief camps into orientation centres.⁵³

The Barre regime was able to handle this drought with the help of the Soviets. The regime was able to lessen the consequences of the famine that followed the drought using Soviet military personnel and aircrafts and assisted by nearly 4,000 Soviet advisers and volunteers, and together with Arab aid, the regime was able to relocate many of the destitute nomads.⁵⁴

In 1976, Barre disbanded the SRC and formed the new Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) in an attempt to reconcile Barre's scientific socialism with Islamic tenets.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Yang Oihe, *Africa South of the Sahara 2001* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), 1025.

⁵² Meaning “the long tailed” in Somali

⁵³ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 218.

⁵⁴ Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia*, 88.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 219–23.

The Ogaden War and the Shift from East to West

Ever since the 1960 independence, Somali irredentism concerning the Ogaden region in Ethiopia and Northern Frontier District in Kenya was prominent in all the different governments, only differing in approach. The region of Ogaden in Ethiopia had continuously been inhabited by ethnic Somalis but was granted to Ethiopia by the British during the protectorate era in 1947. Before this, almost all the Ogaden clans had presented a petition to the British authorities against letting Ethiopia gain control of Ogaden. Nevertheless, even though there was strong Somali opposition to the decision, and even from British officials in Somalia, the British transferred control over Ogaden to Ethiopia on 23 September 1948.⁵⁶

As mentioned, the Republic had initiated various border skirmishes with Ethiopia in the 1960s, but it was not before Barre came to power that matters intensified. In 1974, the imperial Government of Ethiopia got overthrown, and during the political turmoil and resulting power vacuum in Ethiopia, Barre sharpened his efforts to annex the Ogaden region. The new government in Ethiopia to fill the power vacuum was a military junta known as the Derg. Derg can be loosely translated to mean committee in the Amharic language. The Derg government were heavily influenced by communist ideology.⁵⁷

Barre met with the Ethiopian Derg government in 1976 for peace talks in Addis Ababa, but the talks were inconclusive, and nothing came out of it. In mid-1976, the Somali army was marshalling at the border, and in early 1977, pro-Somali forces in the Ogaden region attacked national railway lines and began to occupy the Ogaden. In June of 1977, the Somali National Army crossed the border into Ethiopia and started a full-scale war.⁵⁸

The official stance of the Somali government was that the war in Ogaden was an internal affair between the Ethiopian government and the inhabitants of the Ogaden, or specifically the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF), a militant group that fought for secession from the

⁵⁶ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 129–30.

⁵⁷ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855 - 1991*, 2. ed., reprinted, Eastern African Studies (Oxford: Currey [u.a.], 2007), 233–34.

⁵⁸ Belete Belachew Yihun, 'Ethiopian Foreign Policy and the Ogaden War: The Shift from "Containment" to "Destabilization," 1977–1991', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 680, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2014.947469>.

Ethiopian government.⁵⁹ In February 1978, Barre announced that Somalia was officially part of the war.⁶⁰

Between 1974 and 1977, Ethiopian foreign relations changed drastically when the Derg government's relation to the U.S. Carter administration deteriorated. The Derg expelled US personnel, closed US installations and voiced grievances against what they felt were US hypocrisy on matters of human rights. Colonel Mengistu, de facto leader of the Derg government, visited Moscow and nurtured relations with the Soviets in 1976, resulting in a "solemn declaration 'of mutual collaboration and the denunciation of 'imperialist' and 'reactionary' forces".⁶¹

Mengistu achieved a \$385 million arms agreement with the Soviets during his visit. Despite this agreement, the US- Ethiopian relationship did not break down before 1977 when Mengistu publicly announced his intention to seek military aid and relations with socialist countries.⁶²

The Soviet position in Somalia seemed secure until Ethiopia's foreign policy realignment. It was the Soviets who had turned Somalia from a poor and non-populous state into one of Africa's strongest military presences. Due to Soviet aid, Somalia was able to defend against external attacks and had the means to push its irredentist agenda. However, relations between the Barre government and the Soviets soured eventually, with Barre pandering to the US and his increasingly better relations to the Arab world.⁶³

With the Soviets becoming more interested in pursuing relations with Ethiopia and adding a strong public resentment towards Soviet personnel in Somalia, Barre finally broke ties with the Soviet Union in November 1977 and evicted the 6,000 Soviet civilian and military personnel and their families.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Barre renounced the 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR.⁶⁵

As always, Somalian alignment would once more depend on which aid source would be more beneficial. At first, Somalia rejected the Western bloc because of the USSR's more generous

⁵⁹ Yihun, 'Ethiopian Foreign Policy and the Ogaden War', 680.

⁶⁰ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 238.

⁶¹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 233.

⁶² David, 'Realignment in the Horn', 75.

⁶³ David, 'Realignment in the Horn', 76.

⁶⁴ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 235–36.

⁶⁵ David, 'Realignment in the Horn', 79.

offer of aid, but later, the Somali would grow resentful of the Soviets due to the poor quality of goods and aid projects and the terms of debt repayment. Furthermore, Somalia was offered massive aid from the Arab states on the condition that they would break with the Soviets. For Barre, it was not a hard choice. When relations with USSR soured due to the Soviets suspending military aid to Somalia, it was easy for him to accept Arab aid and break with the Soviets.⁶⁶

At first, the Soviets supplied both sides in the conflict but ultimately chose to side with Ethiopia. Together with their Cuban allies, the USSR helped train Ethiopian soldiers and supplied other military aid in a counter-offensive against the Somali forces who in late 1977 had occupied vast areas of the Ogaden region. With the help of approximately 1,500 Soviet advisers and 18,000-20,000 Cuban troops, the Ethiopians managed to recapture the Ogaden and push out the Somali forces, effectively ending the war.⁶⁷

The consequences of the Somali defeat were a weakening of Barre's regime and a widespread disillusionment and discontentment amongst the Somali public. This state of affairs, in turn,

led disgruntled elements in the army to mount an abortive coup just a month after the retreat from the Ogaden. Subsequently, a dozen men were executed and many more fled the country to join or found clan-based opposition organisations to which the Ethiopian government was only too happy to lend support, to counterbalance Mogadishu's backing of the WSLF [Western Somalia Liberation Front] and SALF [Somali-Abo Liberation Front].⁶⁸

However, the Ethiopian Derg Government did not seek to elevate a favoured candidate to power in Somalia. Instead, they sought to actively destabilise the country and exploited every opportunity that domestic turmoil in Somalia could offer.⁶⁹

Following the Ogaden war, Barre's response to domestic issues took three forms: the declaration of a state of emergency; the promulgation of a new constitution; and shake-ups of government personnel and the party leadership."⁷⁰

⁶⁶ David, 'Realignment in the Horn', 85.

⁶⁷ Gebru Tareke, 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (2000): 655-661, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3097438>.

⁶⁸ Tareke, 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited', 666-67.

⁶⁹ Yihun, 'Ethiopian Foreign Policy and the Ogaden War', 680-81.

⁷⁰ Harry Ododa, 'Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977-78', *Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 3 (December 1985): 288, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263208508700630>.

From Defeat to Domestic Turmoil and Western Aid

When the Ethiopians recaptured the Ogaden region in 1978, many Ogaden-Somali refugees numbering in the hundreds of thousands came into Somalia, spurring the government into action. The government responded by setting up a National Refugee Commission and establishing a chain of refugee camps in the country's south, centre, and north. Siad Barre appealed to the international community for aid, which resulted in a response of short-term emergency relief.⁷¹

While dealing with the humanitarian ramifications of the Ogaden defeat, Barre had to deal with opposition groups in and outside Somalia seeking to work against his regime. The only political organisation allowed within Somalia was the SRSP, which meant that most opposition groups formed in the international diaspora. Some of these groups were led by government officials who had partaken in the failed coup of 1978, and some were led by prominent members of the different parts of the diaspora. From time to time, some of the different groups merged. The more prominent groups to emerge inside Somalia were the Somali Salvation Front (SSF), later known as the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the first armed opposition group, and the Somali National Movement (SNM), established in London, later localised to Northern Somalia.⁷²

These groups, amongst a plethora of other opposition groups, laid accusations against Barre and his regime.

The charges include: Mismanaging the Ogaden war; sending members of tribes other than his own to die in the Ogaden war; nepotism; tribalism; 'fascist rule'; 'tyrannical rule'; advocating Marxism; repression; abuse of human rights; running 'an absolute and despotic dictatorship'; the 'undermining of the faith and Islamic way of life of the Somali people'; sending assassination squads abroad to infiltrate opposition movements and liquidate their leaders; and pursuing and 'incoherent, ill-conceived, unpredictable and self-defeating foreign policy which has resulted in the isolation of the Somali Republic and international indifference to Somali causes'.⁷³

⁷¹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 246–47.

⁷² Ododa, 'Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977–78', 286.

⁷³ Ododa, 'Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977–78', 286–87.

Despite these devastating accusations, Barre managed to secure long-term international aid from the Western bloc through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). They took primary financial responsibility, though Somalia had to meet the initial costs of the refugee relief programme.⁷⁴

After the break with the Soviet Union and receiving aid from the Arab states, the refugee crisis locked Somalia into receiving aid from the Western bloc. The governments of the Western bloc were concerned about and would dissuade Somali irredentism and encourage improvement in relations between Somalia and Kenya. This attitude was reflected in the emphasis on civilian aid rather than military, i.e. aid directed at humanitarian and development issues instead of military reinforcement. It was also evident in the United States' reluctance in providing more than basic defensive military equipment valued at \$8.7 million instead of the \$47 million requested by Somalia in 1987.⁷⁵

The United States saw Somalia as an important strategic partner to have in Eastern Africa, and Siad Barre offered the US the use of military bases in Somalia. However, the US always considered Somalia a consolation prize, as they in reality wanted influence in Ethiopia.⁷⁶

Economic and military aid to Somalia from the US between 1978 to 1989 formed part of a semi-coordinated, multilateral effort between the US and its Western and Arab allies, particularly Saudi-Arabia. The risk of diplomatic fallout for supplying an irredentist state with offensive weaponry was not something the US could afford. Therefore, beginning in 1980, the US settled on providing a package of military aid, defined as defensive. The aid began with \$45 million for the period 1980-1981, and came to a total of over \$500 million until 1989. This was the largest US security aid program ever provided to a sub-Saharan state. However, this “defensive” military aid constituted just a small part of total arms transfers to Somalia in the 1980s. Significant financial aid from Saudi-Arabia and other donors enabled Barre to acquire arms and weaponry worth \$580 million between 1979 and 198. Somalia imported most of this weaponry from Italy.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 247.

⁷⁵ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 248–49.

⁷⁶ Ken Menkhaus, ‘U.S. Foreign Assistance to Somalia: Phoenix From the Ashes?’, *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 1 (January 1997): 128, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.1997.tb00255.x>.

⁷⁷ Menkhaus, ‘U.S. Foreign Assistance to Somalia’, 130–31.

As mentioned earlier, Somalia's relations with West Germany had soured due to Somalia recognising East Germany. However, in 1977, West Germany and Somalia were reconciled. In October 1977, four terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked a Lufthansa aircraft. For four days, the aircraft was denied landing rights in every country it approached, though they got to refuel at a few airports until Somali authorities allowed it to land at the airport in Mogadishu.⁷⁸ With the help of Somali officials, German commando soldiers were able to retake the plane. This event led to the West Germans granting Somalia a credit of approximately \$12million, though not before consulting with their NATO allies.⁷⁹

Domestic Conflict

Western influence on Somalia was evidenced in 1979 when the SRSP approved a new constitution that restored civilian institutions and elective politics. "The People's Assembly, the national legislative assembly, was empowered to elect the President who would serve a six-year term."⁸⁰ After a unanimous decision in the Assembly, Barre was elected President. He kept power and made some significant changes to his government. However, in 1980, when the refugee crisis was at its peak, Barre declared a state of emergency and re-established the Supreme Revolutionary Council, Barre's initial government apparatus, from 1969 to 1976. This move overlapped with other administrative structures, leading to confusion amongst the population and "discouraged decision-making outside the President's immediate circle."⁸¹ As a consequence, this decision reduced the People's Assembly to nothing more than a formality.⁸²

Nevertheless, in 1982, Barre disbanded the SRC just before Barre's first official visit to the United States. He also had, under American pressure, released two prisoners of conscience. However, these releases were followed by the arrests of seven prominent figures in the regime, who were accused of scheming against the government. For the upper echelons in the regime,

⁷⁸ Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* (Scarecrow Press, 2003), 139.

⁷⁹ David D. Laitin, 'The War in the Ogaden: Implications for Siyaad's Rôle in Somali History', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 17, no. 1 (1979): 105–6.

⁸⁰ Ododa, 'Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977–78', 288.

⁸¹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 249.

⁸² Ododa, 'Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977–78', 288.

the state of affairs at that time was a volatile mixture of demotion, promotion and imprisonment, all according to Barre's political intrigues.⁸³

For the Somali public, these tendencies had already visibly emerged in 1975, when ten sheikhs were publicly executed for speaking out against the regime's new family laws. For most Somalis, this was a major sign that they were under tyrannical rule. Until the end of the Ogaden war, governmental repression primarily targeted individuals suspected of disloyalty. After the war, specific clans were targeted, particularly the Isaaq and Majerteen clans in the north, due to certain armed opposition groups consisting mainly of members of those clans.⁸⁴

Domestic turmoil and the emergence of and later proliferation of armed opposition groups in 1976 was a significant aggravation to intra-state conflict. Around 1980, the Barre regime was "politically, economically and diplomatically ruined".⁸⁵

Barre had to deal with opposition groups inside Somalia, amongst others, the SSF/SSDF, established in 1978. Barre's response to this establishment was a nationwide collective punishment against the Isaaq and Majerteen clans, of whom he accused of supporting the opposition group. Ever since Barre came to power in 1969, he had targeted the Majerteen, but the scale, magnitude and intensity of this persecution and repression increased significantly after Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden war. When the SSDF captured two towns in mid-1982, the regime responded with a "scorched earth policy".⁸⁶

This policy consisted of "destroying water resevoirs, burning 18 villages" [...] as well as planting land mines around the main centers and confiscating thousands of livestock and subjected "both the urban population and nomads ... to summary arrest, detention in squalid conditions, torture, rape, and all forms of psychological intimidation." [...] The response of the regime was the direct military action and punitive measures against non-combatant civilian populations throughout their clan homelands.⁸⁷

The Derg government proliferated the efforts of the opposition group in Ethiopia, who sought to destabilise Somalia.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the SNM, backed mainly by the Isaaq clan, had from the

⁸³ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 249–50.

⁸⁴ Menkhaus, 'Calm between the Storms?', 567.

⁸⁵ Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia*, 189.

⁸⁶ Lidwien Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991*, Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 81–82.

⁸⁷ Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 82.

⁸⁸ Yihun, 'Ethiopian Foreign Policy and the Ogaden War', 680.

start voiced intention to join efforts with the SSDF, as some regime decisions affected the prosperity of the northern region. The growing of qat, a stimulant narcotic plant, had been a major cash crop in the northwest. So, when the regime decided to illegalise the plant, the Isaaq saw this as an attack on them and their commercial activity, and it was possibly the intention of the regime to inflict economic damage to the northerners.⁸⁹ The Derg government in Ethiopia supported these groups wholeheartedly as they saw it as a counterbalance to Somalia supporting the Western Liberation Front in the Ogaden.⁹⁰

The SSDF did not last long, though, as conflict with the Mengistu regime resulted in the disbanding of the SSDF and many returning to the Barre fold. This conflict concerned the capture of the two towns mentioned above. Barre, who had already started to crack down on the Isaaq, saw an opportunity in these returnees and co-opted them into his plans for the Isaaq.⁹¹

Barre had publicly worked against clannism and tribalism at the onset of his reign, but there were still elements of this in his rule. This was especially true after the Ogaden war when Barre actively used clan differences for his intrigues and solidified power in his own clan's hands. Historians generally conceptualise this period as when Barre's power and control were based on his clan affiliations with the Marehan clan, Ogaadeen clan, and the Dulbahante clan, or MOD for short. Barre's father was part of the Marehan, his mother of the Ogaadeen, and his son-in-law the Dulbahante, all sub-clans of the Darod. After Barre visited Romania in the mid-1970s, where he observed Nicolae Ceaușescu with his wife and their family holding a majority of high positions of power, he would concentrate power in the hands of members of his clan into the 1980s, primarily to members of the MOD-clans.⁹²

Most of the 1980s consisted of Barre's MOD-regime trying to consolidate power and exercise violence against and state control over the northern areas traditionally inhabited by members of the Isaaq clan. Barre was unable to control the profitable northern commerce in livestock and qat fully, and the growing insurgency led by members of the Isaaq proved challenging to Barre's ambitions in northern Somalia. Because of these factors, Barre implemented harsh measures against Isaaqs in the north, resulting in strained tensions between refugees from the Ogaden and

⁸⁹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 252; Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 84.

⁹⁰ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 253.

⁹¹ Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 83.

⁹² Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia*, 190–95.

resident Isaaqs. The Government armed these refugees and conscripted many of them into the army to use them against the Isaaqs and encouraged these refugees to claim property from displaced Isaaqs. The Somali National Front, who had waged a guerrilla war for several years against the government, attacked UNCHR refugee camps and government installations in 1988.⁹³

⁹³ Catherine Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Class, and the Legacy of Slavery*, Kindle ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

Chapter – 3

Norway and Somalia in the 1960s and 1970s

When did Norway and Somalia start to interact with each other? How much have Somalis and Norwegians interacted over the years? Since independence, Somalia sought aid from other countries, and Norway came into the picture in time. When did Norway start aid activity in Somalia, and how did one go from barely knowing about the other to establishing diplomatic relations? Before Somalia's independence, there were only two recorded instances of Norwegian officials interacting with Somalis. The first time was when Trygve Halvdan Lie mediated between Italy and Ethiopia to settle a border dispute concerning Somalia, which was an Italian trusteeship at the time, in 1959.⁹⁴ The later Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Ali Daar was known to have visited Norway for the negotiations.⁹⁵ The second time was when the United Nations sent the Norwegian Arne Bjørgung to Somalia to head a programme to help Somali trade export and marketing in 1959. Bjørgung had, before his position at the UN, been part of The Export Council of Norway (ECN).⁹⁶ Bjørgung would later be one of the more frequent Norwegian actors to deal in and with Somalia. First, he was a trade promotion and marketing expert partially paid for by the UN and Somalia. Later, he became a businessman in the private sector, which was when he became honorary vice-consul for Norway and later honorary consul.

⁹⁴ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/trygve-halvdan-lie>

⁹⁵ Letter, Norway's Red Cross to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter NMFA), 7 February 1962, Box L0467, Utenriksdepartementet (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hereafter UD), Riksarkivet (National Archives of Norway hereafter RA).

⁹⁶ Letter, Export Council of Norway to NMFA, 4 July 1969, Box L0283, UD, RA.

Norway and the increased international presence in the field of aid

Entering the 1960s, Norway became more active internationally, particularly concerning development aid. In 1962, Norsk Utviklingshjelp (Norwegian Development Aid) was established as a government agency to manage Norway's development aid to developing countries.⁹⁷ Later in 1968, the agency reformed into the Norwegian Agency for International Development (Norad).⁹⁸ Norway's aid was mainly channelled through the UN from 1962; as such, it was multilateral aid. However, further into the 1960s and 1970s, there was a shift towards bilateral aid and cooperation with developing countries.⁹⁹

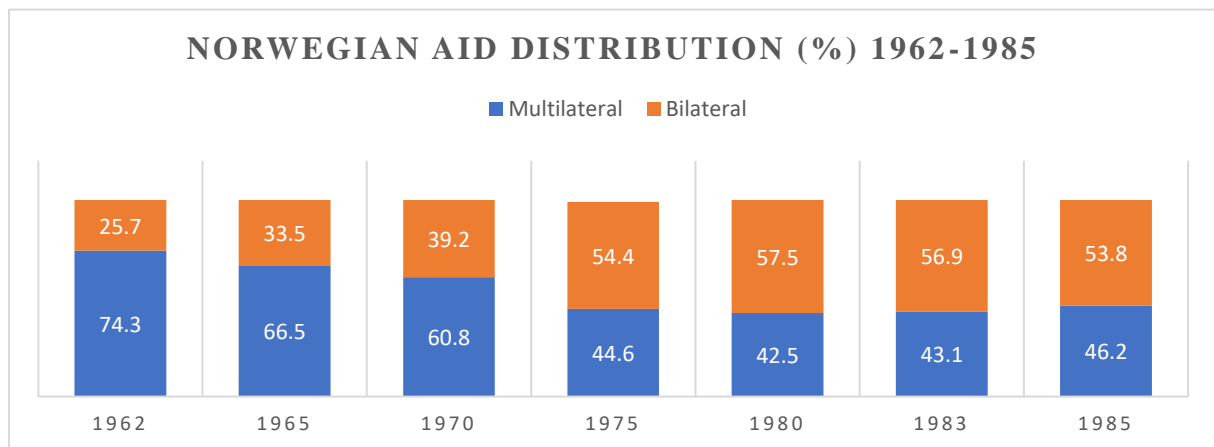


Figure 1: Source: Simensen, *Norge møter den tredje verden* p. 251

In Figure 1, one can observe the gradual shift from multilateral to bilateral aid, but it does not show multi-bi aid because it got budgeted as bilateral aid.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:106.

⁹⁸ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:114.

⁹⁹ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:82.

¹⁰⁰ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:268.

Norway and the newly independent states of Africa in the 1960s

In the late 1950s, when many African countries were about to become independent from colonial powers, Norwegian public opinion was heavily in favour of decolonisation and sympathetic to the plight of freedom movements. With a long history of unions with Denmark and Sweden, many Norwegians would easily identify with struggles for independence in Africa and Asia. In Africa, Norway would enjoy a good reputation due to not being a historical colonial power like i.a., Britain and France.¹⁰¹

Somalia achieved independence in 1960. Norway acknowledged Somalia as a new and independent state and as such established the diplomatic relation. As Berridge tells us, "To be in diplomatic relations is the normal condition between states enjoying mutual recognition; hence, diplomatic relations is often spoken of as 'normal relations'."¹⁰²

Aside from recognising Somalia as an independent state, Norway did not establish any immediate diplomatic interaction. However, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) took some interest in surveying the country and assessing the new situation. The Consul General of Cape Town, Erik Andreas Colban, spent some time in Somalia during independence celebrations and observed the situation. He concluded that the Somali Republic could not be sustained without foreign aid. In his report to the ministry in Oslo, he commented on the political landscape in Somalia, claiming that the government seemed amicable to the Western Bloc. Further, he said that communism did not pose any significant "threat" as the Soviet and Chinese efforts did not raise any concerns. Instead, it was the United Arab Republic that was conducting a significant infiltration offensive.¹⁰³

During the celebrations, Colban had discussed Scandinavian interests in Somalia with the Swedish and Danish ambassadors. Colban had stated that if connections were to be established, it could only be possible with an unpaid consulate in Norway's case. He observed that even though Mogadishu was a port city, there were no proper quays where ships could anchor, and cargo had to be transported from the ships onto barges onto land. Disembarking or embarking of sailors was highly unlikely, and if any were to become sick, it was not advised to send sick

¹⁰¹ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:273.

¹⁰² G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 99, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137445520>.

¹⁰³ Report, Colban to NMFA, 6 July 1960, Box L2934, UD, RA.

people into Mogadishu. Colban concluded that it would be interesting to monitor the market but that Norway would likely not have many prospects to increase Norwegian export to Somalia. Colban recommended that the question of establishing a consulate should be raised to the Norwegian Shipowner's Association.¹⁰⁴ On the request of the MFA, the Norwegian Shipowner's Association weighed in on the issue and did not recommend or see the need for consular representation based on trade interests, as shipping involving Somalia was trivial.¹⁰⁵

In 1961, the Export Council of Norway (ECN) sent a representative to Somalia to evaluate if establishing an unpaid consulate was needed or wanted. Like the Shipowner's Association's report, the representative found that Norwegian trade activity was trivial, and prospects to increase exports and imports from Somalia were severely limited. Three cities were of interest: Mogadishu for various goods, Kismayo for bananas, and Berbera for its cattle. However, as remarked by Colban, Mogadishu did not have a quay, and neither did Kismayo or Berbera. The evaluation was the same as that of the Shipowner's Association that establishing a consulate based on trade was unnecessary. However, on the other hand, it could be prudent to appoint a consul as a gesture of goodwill towards a government of a country that recently had gained its independence. The ECN concluded that even though trade did not necessitate the establishment of a consulate, it was important to facilitate possible business interests in all newly independent states in Africa. ECN proposed to make the English businessman Mr A. Young honorary consul.¹⁰⁶ Later that year, Arne Bjørgung contacted the NMFA, who asked the NMFA to delay their decision so that he could try to find more potential candidates for the position of honorary consul.¹⁰⁷ The Information Executive of Norway's Red Cross, Bjørn Deichman-Sørensen, spent time in Somalia in February 1962 in order to coordinate the efforts of the International Red Cross in dealing with a recent flood. During his stay, he had had a conversation with the Somali Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Ali Daar, who had informed Deichman-Sørensen that the Somali government wanted to achieve mutual consular representation in Norway and Somalia.¹⁰⁸ When Deichman-Sørensen came back to Norway, he contacted the NMFA. He proposed that Norway establish a consulate in Somalia and appoint the Somali Home Secretary Hagi Mussa Bogor as consul. Bjørgung, shortly after, sent the NMFA a list of

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum, NMFA, 11 July 1960, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹⁰⁵ Letter, Shipowner's Association to NMFA, 16 September, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹⁰⁶ Letter, Export Council of Norway to NMFA, 28 January 1961, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum, NMFA, 2 March 1962, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹⁰⁸ Letter, Norway's Red Cross to NMFA, 7 February 1962, Box L0467, UD, RA.

his recommendations.¹⁰⁹ After assessing the proposed candidates, the NMFA established an honorary consulate in mid-October 1962. The Greek citizen Evanghelos Giannopoulos was appointed honorary consul, officially responsible for aiding Norwegian citizens who might need help when visiting Somalia.¹¹⁰ For the most part, the appointment was a show of goodwill to the Somali Government, and the NMFA did not have much correspondence with Giannopoulos.

Usually, nationals of the receiving state hold the position of honorary consul, but in some cases, expatriates in the receiving state can as well. The honorary consuls are most often than not self-employed businesspeople, and they hold the position on a part-time basis. They do not enjoy the same privileges and immunities as a regular consul, and there have been negative stigma surrounding the title. The common assumption of honorary consuls is that they undertake the responsibility for personal gain, though Berridge argues that "some honorary consuls simply like helping people in difficulties."¹¹¹

Throughout Giannopoulos time as consul, he was unsure about his function. In late 1965 he sent a letter to the NMFA asking for specific instructions regarding his function as honorary consul. Furthermore, he asked for authority to issue passports, grant visas and other "essential functions". This request led to uncertainty within the NMFA about the necessity of even having the consulate. Furthermore, the NMFA was reluctant to give such authority to someone who was not a Norwegian citizen.¹¹²

Throughout most of the 1960s, Norwegian actors did not engage with Somalia. This state of affairs irked the UN Trade & Marketing Expert Arne Bjørgung, who wanted Norwegian actors and businessmen to engage in the Somali market, which in his eyes had great potential.¹¹³ He especially praised the banana market.¹¹⁴ Bananas had been the second-largest export of Somalia, and after independence, the banana industry flourished after reaching out to new

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum, NMFA, 2 March 1962, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹⁰ Circular, Establishment of an unpaid consulate in Mogadishu, Somalia. 29 October 1962, Box L0022, S-3545 – Direktoratet for sjømenn, RA.

¹¹¹ Berridge, *Diplomacy*, 145.

¹¹² Letter, Giannopoulos to the NMFA, 14 December 1965, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹³ Newspaper article, «Skal vi sikre oss fremtidige markeder, må vi sende folk ut», 11 January 1966, L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹⁴ *Aftenposten* 'Somalia har Finfine bananer og verdens beste grapefrukt', *Aftenposten* 1962, *Aftenposten*, 20 January 1962, https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_aftenposten_null_null_19620120_103_34_2.

markets.¹¹⁵ Bjørgung's plea to Norwegian actors and businessmen did not garner much attention, and up to 1966, consulate matters were uneventful. However, in December of 1966, Consul Giannopoulos died of a heart attack. While the consul's widow dealt with the firm, Bjørgung would deal with matters of the consulate until another consul could be appointed.¹¹⁶ In April 1967, the NMFA appointed Somali citizen and businessman Ali Sheikh Mohamed as the new honorary consul. Mohamed worked for the Norwegian consulting company Norconsult, and the NMFA decided he fit the position because he did not actively engage in politics.¹¹⁷

This changed two years later when Consul Mohamed got elected to the Somali parliament. Bjørgung, who was at this time done with his contract with the UN and was about to be an employee in Mohamed's company, sent two suggestions to Oslo: that Consul Mohamed was given leave of absence or something to that effect, and that Bjørgung should be appointed vice-consul, resigning from his UN position to avoid conflicts of interests.¹¹⁸ The Export Council of Norway recommended this appointment, pointing out some of his earlier achievements, and that he had managed to facilitate the export of Norwegian beer from the Ringnes brewery to Somalia.¹¹⁹ At this time, the Swedish MFA was exploring the possibilities of a joint consulate with Norway with Bjørgung as Consul.¹²⁰ In late August 1969, Bjørgung was appointed vice-consul.¹²¹

Leading up to 1969, Bjørgung had been active in trying to increase Norwegian participation in the Somali market, even trying to solicit aid from Norway to a particular Food and Agriculture Organization project. The Somalia Fishery Survey Project aimed to explore the commercial feasibility of pelagic fishery and explore the possibility of exporting the resulting products. Fishing in Somalia was modest at the time, with only approximately 4,500 metric tons fished annually.¹²² To put this number into perspective, in 1969, Norway produced about 2,234,592 metric tons of fish.¹²³ In sum, throughout the 1960s, the Norwegian government, and

¹¹⁵ Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*, New ed., vol. no. 87, African Historical Dictionaries (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 48.

¹¹⁶ Letter, Bjørgung to the NMFA 11 December 1966, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹⁷ Order in Council - Appointment of consul 12 April 1967, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹⁸ Letter, Bjørgung to NMFA, 23 April 1969, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹¹⁹ Letter, ECN to NMFA on the consulate in Mogadishu, 7 July 1969, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹²⁰ Memorandum, NMFA on the consulate in Mogadishu, 14 August 1969, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹²¹ Memorandum, NMFA on the consulate in Mogadishu, 22 August 1969, Box L0283, UD, RA.

¹²² Letter, FAO to NU, 7 January 1969, Box L0281, S-6670 – Direktoratet for utviklingshjelp (NORAD), RA.

¹²³ Klaus Sunnana and Per L Mietle, 'Fiskeristatistikk 1969', n.d., 12.

Norwegian actors in general, had very little to do with Somalia, though some interaction took place.

Bjørgung continued his efforts into the 1970s, and in 1970 he seemingly was met with more interest when he again implored Norwegian actors and businessmen to engage in the Somali market, as he observed many profitable export commissions go to other countries. Throughout the year, many business representatives visited Somalia. One of the more interesting was a Norwegian engineer from the radio production company A/S Nera who, together with Bjørgung, met with the radio broadcasting director in Somalia, Mohamed Abshir, to discuss the possibilities of getting aid or a loan from Norway to expand and modernise the broadcasting in Somalia.¹²⁴ However, it does not seem that anything came from this, and it was possibly the Soviets who took on the project to modernise the broadcasting. In the 1960s, the Soviet Union had helped modernise broadcasting in Somalia.¹²⁵ Later, Siad Barre nurtured relations with the Soviet Union and received much aid. In 1974 Somalia and the USSR signed the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between USSR and Somali Democratic Republic, wherein article 3 stated that the USSR would "contribute to the further development of cooperation between them in the sphere of [...] the press, radio, the cinema, television, [...]".¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Letter, Bjørgung to NMFA, 19 December 1970, Box L0281, UD, RA.

¹²⁵ Thomas Lucien Vincent Blair, *Africa: a market profile*, (Praeger, 1965), 126

¹²⁶ Text of Soviet-Somali Treaty, 18 November 1974, Box L0818, UD, RA.

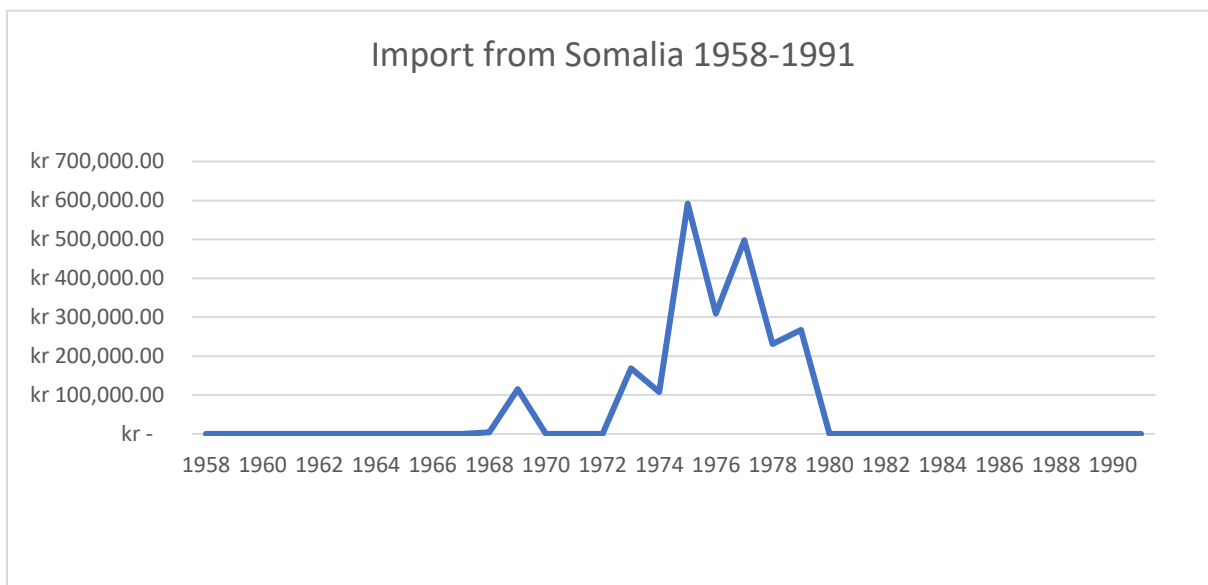


Figure 3: Source: Numbers are taken from Statistics Norway (SSB) Yearbooks 1960-1992

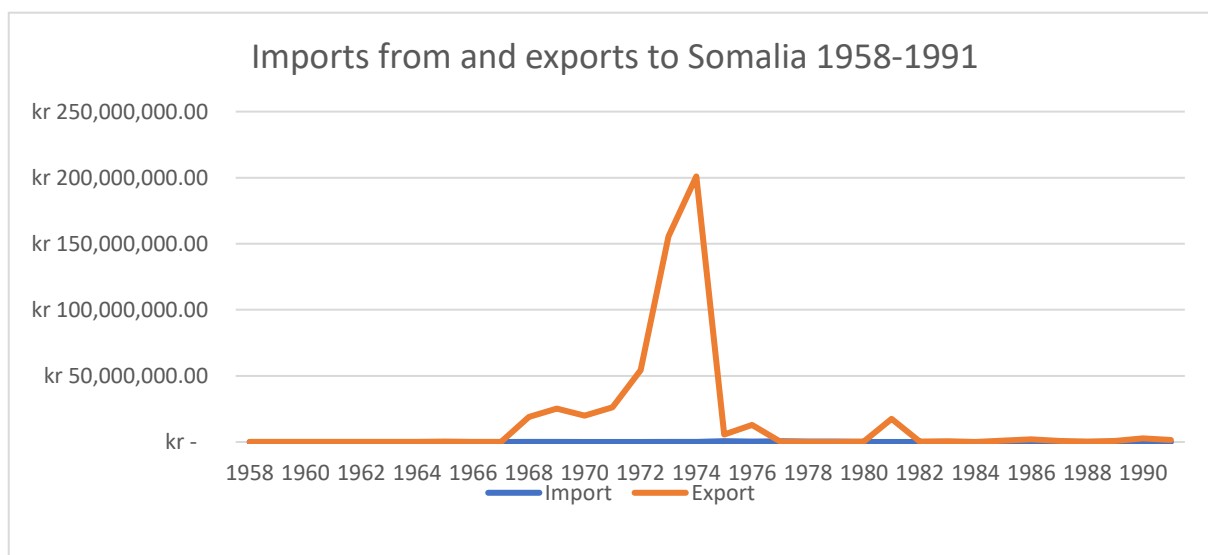


Figure 2: Source: Numbers are taken from Statistics Norway (SSB) Yearbooks 1960-1992

On the general matter of trade, Bjørgung's efforts to engage more Norwegians in trade with Somalia seems to have been relatively successful as Norwegian export to Somalia increased at the start of the 1970s, peaking in 1974. Norway did import a certain amount of goods from Somalia, as figure 2 shows. Nevertheless, as figure 3 shows, imports from Somalia were mainly insignificant compared to Norwegian exports to Somalia. This seemingly great boom to trade exports was momentary as the Dabadheer drought that devastated Somalia's pastoralist economy in 1974-1975 brought it to a sudden stop. The subsequent Ogaden war with Ethiopia also seemed to have impacted the trade so much that there were no profitable markets in Somalia to export Norwegian goods.

Norwegian-Somali State Diplomacy

There were no diplomatic interactions between Norway and Somalia on a state level before 1971, though some in Somalia were eager to achieve diplomatic relations with Scandinavian countries. In 1969, the state coup led by Siad Barre installed the Somali Revolutionary Council. In the new government, there was a renewed effort in establishing diplomatic ties with additional states. One of the more prominent members of the new Somali government was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Umar Arteh Ghalib. He was impressed by the Norwegians when they, in 1970, had broken consular relations with Rhodesia in response to the European minority in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) declaring themselves an independent republic with minority rule. Ghalib praised Norway and described Norway's swift reaction as an "honourable and positive" response to the African anger.¹²⁷

Relations between Norway and Somalia, in the form of actual diplomatic interaction, did not officially start before 12 March 1971, when the Somali Ambassador in London, Ahmed Haji Dualeh, was appointed Somalia's ambassador to Norway.¹²⁸ The following year in June, Dualeh visited Norway to deliver his credentials and had a conversation with Embassy Manager Per Gulowsen. The conversation was mainly about prospects for Norwegian aid, and Dualeh raised some questions about aid and the lack of it from Scandinavian countries. Gulowsen firmly rejected the possibilities of aid from Norway due to Norway's *concentration principle* and limited resources.¹²⁹

In 1967, Norway formulated the concentration principle as a set of guidelines on how to distribute the funds allocated from the national budget to aid. These guidelines were the deciding factor on where and how funds were granted. The central part of these guidelines was the principle of concentration; to concentrate funds geographically to a few select countries.¹³⁰ By 1972, these countries were Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia in East Africa; India and Pakistan in South-Asia. However, some exceptions were made for areas where Norway had relevant expertise, such as fishing and shipping.¹³¹ 1972 was an important year, as the government put

¹²⁷ *Fædrelandsvennen*, 'Somalia med ros til Norge', *Fædrelandsvennen* 1970, 9 March 1970, 20.

¹²⁸ Letter of Approval, 13 March 1971, Box L0468, UD, RA.

¹²⁹ Report – Visit by Somalia's ambassador, 21 June, Box L1850, UD, RA.

¹³⁰ Proposition to the Storting nr 109 (1966-1969), 10.

¹³¹ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:118–19.

forward a white paper that made way for a considerable increase in aid and aid administration.¹³²

Since independence, the Somali Republic and the subsequent Somali Democratic Republic has been reliant on foreign aid. Somalia was an arid land, with one-eighth of the total area being fit for cultivation and only a small portion of that being cultivated by 1970, primarily for sugar and banana plantations. The majority of the population were pastoral nomads, herding a variety of livestock. With no industrialised ventures within ore mining and oil, coupled together with their export being 80% banana and livestock, the country experienced a major trade deficit, only kept in balance by foreign aid from their former colonial rulers and other sources in the form of "grants-in-aid and loans, and stand-by credit arrangements with the International Monetary Fund."¹³³

According to Dualeh, Somalia was looking to develop the fishing sector, and Norway's expertise would be of much help. Dualeh also pointed out Norway's good reputation in Africa because of i.a., not having a colonial past. Gulowsen did not offer or promise anything except to convey the ambassador's wishes to the appropriate authorities.¹³⁴

In October, Dualeh met with Norway's ambassador in London, Paul Koht. Dualeh was exploring whether the Somali Minister of Foreign Affairs Umar Arteh Ghalib could visit Norway as part of a planned trip to Europe, as he had found during his former trips to the Nordic countries that the knowledge about Somalia was minimal. According to Dualeh, Somalia wanted to strengthen relations with the Scandinavian countries, and he had talked with someone in the Norwegian MFA about appointing a Norwegian ambassador to Somalia. Furthermore, Dualeh mentioned Somali interest in discussing fishing and shipping with Norway, remarking that both countries had long coastlines. Norway also seemed to be an acceptable possible business partner due to Norway's acknowledgement of North Vietnam.¹³⁵ Norway did acknowledge the communist state of North Vietnam and established bilateral relations in 1971.¹³⁶ Koht did not promise anything, though, and the question of the visit carried on for

¹³² Iver B. Neumann and Halvard Leira, *Aktiv Og Avventende: Utenriktjenestens Liv 1905-2005*, 1st ed. (Oslo: Pax, 2005), 376.

¹³³ Mehmet, 'Effectiveness of Foreign Aid—the Case of Somalia', 32.

¹³⁴ Report – Visit by Somalia's ambassador, 21 June, Box L1850, UD, RA.

¹³⁵ Letter, Paul Koht to MFA, 26 October, Box L1644 UD, RA.

¹³⁶ *Aftenposten*, «Norge og Nord-Vietnam enige om ambassadører», *Aftenposten*, 27. November 1971.

some years. In 1973, undisclosed members of the Norwegian embassy in London met with members of the British MFA to discuss British views on Somalia in preparation to possibly arrange for an official Somali visit to Norway. The Brits were not on good terms with Somalia, and termed their relationship as "cold". This state of affairs was due to Somalia's "strong east-oriented attitude", that it was difficult to deal with the authorities in Somalia, and that western embassies occasionally experienced "minor harassment". Furthermore, Somalia had expelled British aid workers in Somaliland without explanation.¹³⁷ An official visit by Ghalib never happened.

In September of 1974, Dualeh visited the Norwegian Agency of Development Aid (Norad) to seek aid again. After being rejected again, Dualeh inquired about the possibilities of getting Norway to aid in developing the shipping sector, i.e. the development of ports and harbours. As in earlier discussions, Dualeh wondered why Norway passed over Somalia in favour of countries that were, in Dualeh's opinion, better off than Somalia, and this time voiced concerns if this was due to Somalia being a Muslim country. This time he got an explanation. Norway was concerned that language and communication would be a significant issue if they engaged in development aid to Somalia. One of the reasons for Norway's choices of main cooperation countries had been that the majority spoke English in those countries.¹³⁸ Dualeh stated that this would not be a problem as the majority in Somalia spoke English.¹³⁹ The belief in the NMFA was that Somalia was not anglophone, and therefore cooperation could be severely hindered by communication challenges. Even though Dualeh claimed that the majority of Somalis could speak English, the former colonial administrator and recognised Somalia expert I. M. Lewis claimed that only a small educated elite in northern Somalia spoke English.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, again nothing came of the visit, and Norway did not pledge any aid.

This meeting happened on the backdrop of the Dabadheer drought that devastated Somalia's pastoralist economy in 1974-1975. Some scholars believe that the drought was a continuation of the drought that had wrought havoc over the Sahel region.¹⁴¹ In Somalia, Siad Barre did not acknowledge the drought before October in 1974 when he held a speech followed by the

¹³⁷ Memorandum, «Somalia. Samtale I FCO.», 24 February 1973, L0818, S-6794, UD, RA, Oslo

¹³⁸ Simensen, *1952-1975*, 1:118.

¹³⁹ Report – request from Somalia for aid, 10 September, Box L0281, S-6670. RA.

¹⁴⁰ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 171.

¹⁴¹ AMY O. TSUI, TOD A. RAGSDALE, and ADEN I. SHIRWA, 'THE SETTLEMENT OF SOMALI NOMADS', *Genus* 47, no. 1/2 (1991): 132, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29789048>.

declaration of a state of emergency in November. Siad Barre requested aid from the international community, and they received prompt aid from the USSR while the Western governments and agencies were reluctant. However, as the drought continued to devastate Somalia, the Western governments joined in the effort and pledged considerable aid.¹⁴²

In March of 1975, Dualeh requested humanitarian aid from the Norwegian government.¹⁴³ Norway did not give any direct bilateral aid but did contribute NOK 500,000 earmarked for Somalia through the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) at first to mitigate the ensuing famine.¹⁴⁴ This contribution got dedicated to the improvement of water supplies.¹⁴⁵ Later at the behest of UNDRO, Norway contributed \$ 26,150 to help finance airfreighting thirty-two tons of emergency medical supplies to Somalia.¹⁴⁶ The Norwegian Red Cross contributed financially as well, though the actual amount is uncertain as different sources record different amounts. In a case report from the American Agency for International Development, the record shows that Red Cross/private organisation donations from Norway amounted to \$ 83,300.¹⁴⁷ UNDRO reports that the Norwegian Red Cross contributed \$ 78,431.¹⁴⁸ In a White Paper from the Norwegian Red Cross, the record shows that their contribution was NOK 100,000.¹⁴⁹

Nothing else happened concerning bilateral relations between Norway and Somalia until Somalia appointed a new ambassador to Norway, the Somali Ambassador to Sweden Abdullahi Issa Mohamud, later in 1975.¹⁵⁰ Issa did not engage much with Norway at first, but in 1977 he tried to solicit development aid. Like his predecessor, he was rejected based on the concentration principle, though this time, Norway had opened for exceptions if it pertained to technical assistance in the field of sea transport and financial assistance to family planning.¹⁵¹

As a seafaring nation, Norway's expertise in shipping was evident. The exception for family

¹⁴² Mukhtar, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*, 2003, 67–68.

¹⁴³ Letter, Dualeh to Kjell Rasmussen, 11 March 1975, Box L4361, UD, RA.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram, NMFA to London Embassy, 14 March 1975, L4361, UD, RA.

¹⁴⁵ Addendum – Letter, Norwegian delegation to Geneva to NMFA, 14 July 1975, L4361, UD, RA.

¹⁴⁶ Letter, Berkol (UNDRO) to Nyheim (NMFA), 13 August 1975, L4361, UD, RA.

¹⁴⁷ Agency for international Development, *Case-Report Somalia-Drought 1974-1975*, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadq811.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Addendum – Letter, Norwegian delegation to Geneva to NMFA, 14 July 1975, L4361, UD, RA.

¹⁴⁹ Yngvar Holm and Norges Røde Kors, *Katastrofe: en hvitbok fra Norges Røde kors, Norbok* (Oslo: Norges Røde kors, 1975), 41.

¹⁵⁰ Letter, NMFA to Somali MFA, 29 September, L0468, S-6670, RA.

¹⁵¹ Letter, NMFA to Somali Embassy in Stockholm, 7 August 1977, L0281, S-6670, RA.

planning came from Norway's experiences in supporting India's national family planning programme, which "made possible the transfer of a large volume of Norwegian aid (268.5 million crowns from 1971 to 1982) with a minimal involvement of Norwegian personnel." Also, it was decided in 1968 that support for family planning was to be an integral part of Norwegian development aid.¹⁵²

War, Humanitarian Aid, and Further Concern

In 1977, war broke out between Somalia and Ethiopia over the territory of Ogaden in Ethiopia. Siad Barre supported groups in Ogaden who wanted to separate from Ethiopia and become part of Somalia and subsequently invaded the Ogaden province to realise his agenda of uniting Somalis on the Horn of Africa under one state. During the Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia, Norway decided to keep a neutral attitude out of deference and concern for Kenya, one of Norway's major development cooperation countries, as Kenya felt threatened by Somalia.¹⁵³ It was primarily ethnic Somalis who inhabited the northernmost part of Kenya, and Somalia had already shown aggressive behaviour concerning this area.¹⁵⁴

When the Ogaden conflict was at its peak, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Frydenlund and other members of the NMFA met with Tanzania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Benjamin Mkapa. During the meeting, Frydenlund and Mkapa discussed the situation in the Horn of Africa. In Mkapa's personal opinion, there was a difference in the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Tanzania disagreed with Somalia's view that Ethiopia was a colonial power and that Ethiopia should relinquish Ogaden to Somalia. Furthermore, Tanzania was convinced that it was regular Somali troops occupying major parts of the Ogaden and not liberation groups.¹⁵⁵

In a NATO meeting in Brussels on 23 November, Norway advised non-intervention and that Western countries keep a low profile in the conflict. The USSR had given support to Somalia over the years, but when Barre decided to invade Ethiopia, the USSR chose to support Ethiopia

¹⁵² Pharo, 'Altruism, Security and the Impact of Oil', 543.

¹⁵³ Memorandum – NMFA, 28 August 1978, L1644, UD, RA.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter 2 on Somali claims on the Northern Frontier District in Kenya.

¹⁵⁵ Note, Conversation between Frydenlund and Benjamin Mkapa, 29 September 1977, L0818, S-6794, UD, RA, Oslo

and Barre subsequently severed connections with the USSR. As the USSR backed Ethiopia, Norway and other NATO countries could have supported Somalia but saw the risk of an East-West confrontation by proxy, i.e. Somalia with western backing on one side and Ethiopia with Soviet backing on the other. For Norway, it was also difficult to support the Somali Casus Belli, that Ogaden was a Somali territory. This irredentist agenda clashed with article three in the Organization for African Unity charter that stated that colonial borders were to be respected. On the other hand, the OAU charter advocated self-determination for all peoples.¹⁵⁶ Norway's stance was that the parties involved upheld article three but at the same time that the people of Ogaden should have a certain degree of autonomy.¹⁵⁷ The impression of Norway and others at the meeting was that supporting the OAU to achieve a peaceful solution, though unlikely, was the best course of action.¹⁵⁸

After the Ogaden war, Somalia turned to the Western countries for aid. Somalia had mainly received aid for various purposes from the USSR since the start of Siad Barre's regime, especially since the treaty of friendship and cooperation from 1974. After the war, in addition to the United States and West Germany, Somalia sought to establish better relations with the Scandinavian countries. In 1978, a few months after the official end of the Ogaden war, ambassador Issa in Stockholm tried to set up a visit from Siad Barre to the Scandinavian countries for the following year. Issa met with Norwegian Ambassador Thore Boye in Stockholm. According to Issa, this was to re-establish connections with the Western world after freeing themselves from the "claws of the Russian bear". However, Boye remarked in a letter to the NMFA that throughout the conversation, it seemed that instead of a regular state visit, it would most likely be a "top-level" request for development aid.¹⁵⁹

In October, Issa came to Oslo, and in a conversation with the Secretary-General Georg Kristiansen and Principal Officer Willy Fredriksen in NMFA, it was made clear that Siad Barre planned not only to seek development aid from Norway but to also ask for help in making the United States ease their restrictions on weapon sales to Somalia. Fredriksen informed Issa it was improbable that Norway would help in such matters. Norway had a very restrictive policy when it came to the export of weapons to countries outside of the North Atlantic Treaty

¹⁵⁶ Organization of African Unity (OAU), *Charter of the Organization of African Unity*, 25 May 1963

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum, NMFA, 28 April 1978, Box L0959, UD, RA.

¹⁵⁸ Report, Norwegian delegation to NATO to NMFA, 25 November 1977, L0959, UD, RA.

¹⁵⁹ Letter, Thore Boye to NMFA, 26 June 1978, L1644, UD, RA.

Organization (NATO), and as such, it would be difficult, from a Norwegian standpoint, to forward such a request to the United States government. Adding to the rejection of the idea, Fredriksen also pointed out that Norway was convinced that the conflict on Africa's Horn should be solved with negotiation and not war.¹⁶⁰

In general, the Swedes and Danes were reluctant in receiving Siad Barre, and internally in the NMFA, the visit by Siad Barre was unwanted. The NMFA expected the visit to be a request for aid on top-level, and Norway had already decided that any bilateral aid was out of the question. The NMFA had considered the political implications of the visit as possibly favourable as Western bloc countries had ramped up their humanitarian aid to Somalia and that the US at the time was intent on delivering defensive military equipment. In the end however, Norway, together with the Swedes and the Danes, decided not to receive Siad Barre.¹⁶¹ In Norway's case, this visit was especially unwanted due to Somalia's unchanged irredentist agenda, which conflicted with Norway's interests in Kenya. Furthermore, the NMFA feared it could have been difficult to avoid some sort of bilateral cooperation if Norway agreed to receive Barre.¹⁶² As an NMFA official expressly stated when faced with the possibility of a visit by Siad Barre, "I am of the opinion that we must avoid this visit! As we are not set on any aid cooperation or extended contact with Somalia."¹⁶³

It is clear that for most of the 1970s, Norway held Somalia at arm's length. Norway met any attempts at soliciting aid with the same rejections based on the concentration principle, and politically Norway was not eager to establish strong connections with Somalia.

¹⁶⁰ Note, NMFA, 4 October 1978, L1850, UD, RA.

¹⁶¹ Note, NMFA, 22 August 1978, L1644, UD, RA.

¹⁶² Note, NMFA, 25 May 1979, L1850, UD, RA.

¹⁶³ Note, «Spørsmål om besøk av Somalias president i Norge», 22 August 1978, L1850, S-6794, UD, RA, Oslo «Jeg er av den oppfatning at vi må unngå dette besøk! (da vi ikke er innstilt på noe bistandssamarbeid eller utvidet kontakt med Somalia.»

Multilateral approach

Though Norway did not engage in any direct bilateral aid to Somalia and kept the Somali representatives at arm's length, Norway still helped finance specific multi-bi projects when multilateral organisations or non-governmental organisations requested it. The difference between multilateral and bilateral aid, and multi-bi, is that multi-bi aid gets earmarked for particular projects run by multilateral organisations, like the UN. Norway did not intend to establish any direct commitments to Somalia and specifically Siad Barre. Nevertheless, if a request came from a third-party organisation, Norway was willing to give grants. This approach was formulated in a Paper to Parliament in 1974, which stated that Norway would support the UN's efforts in what was known as the MSA countries. Furthermore, the UN had compiled two lists, a list over the least developed countries (LDC) and a list of countries most severely affected (MSA) by changes in oil prices in that period. Somalia was on both lists.¹⁶⁴

Aside from those already selected as a main cooperation country, Norway's engagement in the MSA and LDC countries would be core financial assistance to the UN's programs. This type of assistance is known as *multilateral Official Development Aid*. Multilateral ODA is financial assistance that is not earmarked to any specific country; instead, it is given to multilateral agencies in accordance with their plans. The OECD uses a method to calculate how much grants used in a country can be attributed to any given DAC donor, so-called *imputed multilateral aid*. Through this calculation, the OECD has statistics showing that Norway contributed over a million dollars to Somalia every year from 1975 through 1979.¹⁶⁵ In 1974, Norway decided to support a UN crisis program and a special fund aimed at tackling problems and issues in the LDC and MSA countries.¹⁶⁶ However, these were not contributions made necessarily with Somalia in mind. Instead, it was a core contribution to multilateral agencies, and donor countries do not have much say in how they disburse this ODA geographically. Even though the OECD attributes some ODA to Norway, it does not represent an intent to help a specific country.

In the second half of the 1970s, Norway chose to help finance two multilateral projects in Somalia, one by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and another by the Food and Agriculture

¹⁶⁴ St. Meld. nr. 94 (1974-1975): 74

¹⁶⁵ <https://stats.oecd.org/>,

¹⁶⁶ St. Meld. nr. 94 (1974-1975): 117

Organization. In 1976 the International Trade Centre initiated a project to advance Somali trade export by finding marketable goods that could be the basis for establishing production and sales. A representative evaluated the project of the ITC in 1979, and the conclusion was that many different aspects made the project less than effective. The memo on the project stated that Somalia was a country where aid activity was a difficult undertaking, mentioning one of Somalia's epithets: "the graveyard of foreign aid". Some of the issues, as observed by the ITC representative were,

- the indifferent people on the Somali side to engage with the project,
- that ITC resources in Kenya could not be used because Kenya refused to give visas to Somali citizens,
- lack of qualified workforce, without the possibilities to make them so,
- no significant discoveries in marketable goods or services,
- very little economic and social development in general, leading to a greater need for aid and diminished ability to absorb that aid effectively.¹⁶⁷

Norway had funded this project in the period 1976-1979, allocating \$ 408,270. The project continued into the 1980s, and in 1980 the project was allocated \$ 148,200.¹⁶⁸

In 1977, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had a project going which was a training school for animal health assistants in Mogadishu. It initially started in 1967 and was financed by the United Nations Development Programme. According to FAO, it was one of their most successful undertakings in Somalia, but UNDP withdrew funds due to administrative changes in UNDP. Funds were to be granted from another organisation, but these funds would not be available immediately. This meant the project had one year of no funding. FAO sent a request to the NMFA to step in and help fund the project.¹⁶⁹ There is no archival material on the deliberations around this issue in the NMFA, but the NMFA approved the request, deciding to finance the project with a contribution of \$ 140'360.¹⁷⁰

Other than these project-specific disbursements, in 1977, Norway contributed humanitarian aid to Somalia channelled through the International Committee of the Red Cross to benefit the

¹⁶⁷ Letter, Norwegian embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 17 July 1979, L0281, S-6670, RA.

¹⁶⁸ Letter, Norad to Norwegian embassy in Nairobi, 13 May 1980, L0281, S-6670, RA.

¹⁶⁹ Letter, FAO to NMFA, 20 July 1977, L3477, UD, RA.

¹⁷⁰ Telegram, NMFA to FAO, 28 July 1977, L3477, UD, RA.

victims in the Ogaden war. This disbursement amounted to NOK 500,000. In 1978, Norway disbursed NOK 10 million to the UNHCR.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Memorandum, "Norsk bilateral hjelp til Somalia..", 12 April 1981, 11.12/100, NMFA, Oslo

Chapter – 4

Norway and Somalia in the 1980s

Through the 1960s and 1970s, Norway did not care much for bilateral cooperation beyond the framework of the principle of geographically concentrated aid or to further diplomatic connections with Somalia. Nevertheless, some non-governmental actors interacted with Somalia. By 1981, some Norwegian shipping agencies had registered their ships under Somali *Flags of Convenience*.¹⁷² In 1979, the Somali government had made an agreement with the Norwegian company Geco A/S to do a seismic survey on the continental shelf outside of Mogadishu. This survey was done in 1980 and had apparently yielded some interesting results. A Somali delegation had also sought out the possibility of financial aid by so-called "soft loans" and Norwegian expertise in the initial drilling phase. The Somalis wanted to solicit professional advice concerning concession laws. The information on the survey was presented at a meeting between a delegation from Somalia and Secretary-General Kjell Eliassen in November 1980 at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). But just like previous meetings between NMFA and a Somali representative, the NMFA would simply cite the principle of concentration and guarantee that they would take the case to the appropriate professional bodies.¹⁷³

In general, Scandinavian interest in Somalia rose, and the consulate in Mogadishu would see some changes. Both Sweden and Denmark had appointed the Norwegian consul Ali Sheikh Mohamed and vice-consul Arne Bjørgung in Mogadishu to represent them as well, though Sweden gave them higher ranks. Finland also appointed Mohamed and Bjørgung to consulate general and consul.¹⁷⁴ Norway followed suit in 1979 and elevated the consulate, making Ali Mohamed a consulate general.¹⁷⁵ Due to Bjørgung's advanced age and impending retirement, the NMFA did not promote Bjørgung to Consul. However, on Ali Mohamed's request and further enquiry by the embassy in Nairobi, the NMFA decided to promote Bjørgung to consul. The NMFA mainly decided on this as an issue of prestige. Sweden and Denmark had appointed

¹⁷² Country Brief on Somalia, 21 April 1981, 11.12/100, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁷³ Conversation minutes, Somalian delegation and Kjell Eliassen, 5. November 1980, 37.4/100 vol 2, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁷⁴ Letter, Finland's embassy to NMFA, 10 March, 2.23/100 vol 3, NFMA, Oslo

¹⁷⁵ Letter, NMFA to Seamen's Directorate, 28 October, L0022, S-3545 Direktoratet for Sjømenn, RA, Oslo

Bjørgung as consul and it would be unreasonable not to do the same, as Bjørgung was a Norwegian citizen.¹⁷⁶

The consulate's activities became more expansive as all the Nordic countries wanted to use it, and the NMFA, in cooperation with the Swedish and Danish MFA, decided to upgrade the available facilities to deal with the increased consulate activity. According to a Swedish report, Bjørgung and Ali Mohamed enjoyed a good reputation. Despite the Somali state nationalising several of Ali Mohamed's businesses, he still had control of a construction company that he owned. Barre had as part of his vision for 'scientific socialism' and a Marxist state nationalised many Somali companies in 1970.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, Bjørgung would do most of the work at the consulate. Sweden and Denmark gave Bjørgung more authority than Norway gave him, and Bjørgung could issue visas for Somalis going to Denmark or Sweden. He could only issue recommendation letters for visas for Somalis wanting to travel to Norway.¹⁷⁸ Work at the consulate consisted mainly of communication with private firms and facilitation for accommodation for visiting Norwegians.¹⁷⁹ In 1981, when NMFA expected that Bjørgung would retire due to his age, he requested an extension of his period as consul. He was going to assist Ali Mohamed in any case as Swedish and Danish consul, so he might as well do so as a Norwegian consul.¹⁸⁰ However, Swedish age regulation did not allow for his continued service after 1981, and the Danish decided to follow suit with whatever the NMFA Oslo decided. However, the NMFA decided to terminate his service, and Ali Mohamed stayed on as Consulate General.¹⁸¹

Mohamed's services as consul earned him many accolades.¹⁸² Among these, he was awarded a Norwegian knighthood, St. Olav knight of first class. With this, he became the first and only Somali citizen to date to earn a Norwegian knighthood.¹⁸³¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁶ Memorandum, "Generalkonsulatet I Mogadiscio", 10 October 1980, 2.23/100 vol 3, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁷⁷ Mukhtar, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*, 2003.

¹⁷⁸ Letter, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 1 April 1980, 2.23/100 vol 3, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁷⁹ Report, 'Annual report for 1980 from Mogadishu – Somali Democratic Republic', 18 January 1981, 2.23/100, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁸⁰ Letter, Bjørgung to Embassy in Nairobi, 22 December 1981, 2.23/100, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁸¹ Letter, NMFA to Embassy in Nairobi, 18 June 1982, 2.23/100, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁸² <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/vor-mand-i-somaliland>

¹⁸³ <https://www.kongehuset.no/tildelinger.html?tid=87941&sek=27337&q=somalia&type=&aarstall=>

¹⁸⁴ However, Mohamed is not the only person with Somali background to receive knighthood. In 2014, Sofia Abdi Haase, a Norwegian citizen with Somali background received the same knighthood.

<https://www.kongehuset.no/tildelinger.html?tid=28028&sek=27995&q=Safia+Abdi+Haase&type=&aarstall=>

By the mid-1980s, Norwegian presence in Somalia was very modest. Annual reports from the consulate showed a decent amount of communication between Norwegian firms and the consulate.¹⁸⁵ In 1985, however, the number of Norwegian expatriates was only ten, six adults and four children. These expatriates mainly were involved with the Norwegian Red Cross' involvement with a physical rehabilitation centre in Mogadishu. In comparison, the number of Danish expatriates was 120, the Swedish numbered 25, and the Finnish numbered 15. Norwegian Ambassador Paal Bog, who was stationed in Nairobi, visited Somalia in 1985. This was the first time a Norwegian ambassador ever visited Somalia. The Danish and Swedish ambassadors, also then stationed in Egypt, visited Somalia often twice annually. Bog found that the new facilities were not equipped with a Norwegian Flag during his visit. The NMFA had decided that the consulate was not to be equipped with a trade flag. Bog saw it as undesirable that the consulate would have the Swedish, Danish and Finnish flag flying but not the Norwegian, so he gave one to the consulate. Another matter Bog brought up was that Ali Mohamed's age on paper was not correct. According to the NMFA's calendar, Mohamed was born in 1916. However, according to an earlier report from the Swedish MFA, this birth year could be wrong.¹⁸⁶ Later it was revealed that the birth year was incorrect, and he was born in 1922.¹⁸⁷ If he had been born in 1916, he would be at retirement age in 1986. Since he was born in 1922, he could continue as consulate general until 1992.

In the latter part of the 1980s, the consulate operated as normal, servicing expatriates and companies visiting Mogadishu. However, from 1988 and onwards, domestic unrest was prevalent in Somalia. In 1988, civil war broke out between the government in Mogadishu and oppositional groups in Somalia. In 1991, the oppositional groups overthrew Siad Barre. Siad Barre fled from Somalia and the result was state collapse with a major power vacuum. In the immediate aftermath of the state collapse, different groups vied for power and violence became the norm. Mogadishu turned into a battlefield, and the consulate did not go unscathed. At this time, Mohamed's son Hussein Ali inherited the position as vice-consul at the consulate for Sweden. Norway had not given him this status, even though it seems as if Hussein Ali was

¹⁸⁵ Letter Addendum, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 18 March 1985, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo;
Letter Addendum, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 19 March 1984, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo;
Letter Addendum, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 8 March 1983, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo;
Letter Addendum, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 24 February 1982, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo

¹⁸⁶ Letter, Paal Bog to NMFA, 12 November 1985, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo

¹⁸⁷ Letter, Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi to NMFA, 9 December 1985, 2.23/100, NMFA,Oslo

under the impression that he was vice-consul for Norway as well. Due to the unrest, Hussein Ali would travel to Kenya after sustaining injuries under attacks on the consulate by hostile gangs. Mohamed stayed behind in Mogadishu.¹⁸⁸ After receiving medical attention, Hussein Ali got visas to the Nordic countries and travelled there. He visited Norway in July 1991, where he would debrief on the situation in Mogadishu and the consulate.¹⁸⁹ Communication with the consulate in Somalia was almost non-existent, but in 1992, Mohamed managed to get a letter to the Norwegian embassy in Nairobi where he detailed the harsh conditions in Mogadishu.¹⁹⁰ Later that year, Mohamed successfully escaped Mogadishu and travelled to England, from where he would go to Somaliland in northern Somalia.¹⁹¹

In 1993, the NMFA decided to formally close down the Norwegian side of the consulate in tandem with the Swedish MFA. From the NMFA's perspective, the consulate had not been in operation for two years and was by default already closed down. Mohamed was residing in Hargeisa in Somaliland, and Hussein Ali, who at this time had gone back to Mogadishu, did not have any affiliation to Norway as with the other Nordic countries. Instead of directly firing Mohamed, the common way was to ask them to deliver a letter of resignation. The NMFA would use the age limit as the reason for Mohamed's resignation.¹⁹² Furthermore, in 1994, the NMFA received a request from a Somali organisation in Denmark, United Somali & Danish Friendship Committee, to appoint a new consul among the citizens in southern Somalia. According to the organisation, Mohamed was from the Isaaq-clan and currently residing in Hargeisa. In their perspective, the appointment of a southern Somali to the position as consul in southern Somalia would prevent misunderstandings and conflict that could arise when Somali refugees tried to reconnect with family left behind in Somalia and Somaliland. The reasoning comes from the animosity between the different Somali clans that came to characterise the conflict.¹⁹³ Ali Sheikh Mohamed made one final visit to Norway in May of 1994. During his trip, he visited the MFA to debrief on the situation in Mogadishu and the consulate. The consulate premises were taken care of by his son, and all equipment and documents were sent to safety in Nairobi. The Swedish MFA had not yet told Mohamed of the decision to rescind

¹⁸⁸ Letter, Department of Justice to NMFA, 4 February 1991, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁸⁹ Memorandum, Generalkonsulatet I Mogadishu – Statusrapport», 23 July, 1991, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹⁰ Fax, Danish Embassy to NMFA, 9 March 1992, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹¹ Letter, Ali Sheikh Mohamed to NMFA, 15 November 1992, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹² Letter, NMFA to Swedish MFA, 17 November 1993, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹³ Letter, United Somlai & Danish Friendship Committee to NMFA, 5 May 1994, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

his status as consul. The NMFA decided to wait as well to inform Mohamed of their decision.¹⁹⁴ Most likely, the Swedish MFA and NMFA sent him an official letter at a later time. According to Mohamed, he never received an official letter from Denmark and considering his continuous service to Danish nationals and Somalilanders, he was technically a Danish consul beyond the millennium change.¹⁹⁵

Diplomacy

Bilateral relations between Norway and Somalia were very modest in the 1980s. Aside from the delegation in 1980, another delegation travelled to Norway in 1981. This delegation consisted of Somalia's Minister of Local Government, Somalia's UN Ambassador Abdullahi Said Osman, Ambassador Abdullahi Issa and Director of Public Relations Ahmed-Yasin Issa in Somalia's Refugee Commission. As with every previous meeting between Norwegian and Somali officials, the meeting discussed possible Norwegian bilateral aid and cooperation. The minutes of the conversation showed that the delegation's arguments and speaking points were not very well structured, as the note-taker could not make "heads or tails" of it, in essence that he did not comprehend what they were trying to say. Again, the Norwegians rejected the notion of direct bilateral aid to the Somali state due to the principle of geographical concentration. The delegation would then turn to the oil survey findings and talk about other areas of cooperation where Norway could engage.¹⁹⁶

After this meeting, Norway and Somalia did not have much to do with each other. Most correspondences between the Somali embassy in Stockholm and Oslo was receipts and notes on staff changes at the Somali embassy in Stockholm and communiques on Somali foreign policy.¹⁹⁷ The Somali Embassy would sporadically send requests for aid to Oslo. In 1984, the Somali Embassy in Stockholm requested humanitarian aid from the NMFA.¹⁹⁸ The NMFA responded by referring to grants made to the Norwegian Church Aid in 1983. Furthermore, this

¹⁹⁴ Memorandum, "Generalkonsulatet I Mogadiscio", 27 May 1994, 2.23/100 vol 4, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/danmark/vor-mand-i-somaliland>

¹⁹⁶ Note, NMFA meeting with Somalia's minister responsible for questions related to refugees, 27 April 1981, 11.12/100, NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹⁷ The notes and receipts can be found in dossier 14.2/100 vol 3. at NMFA, Oslo; the communiques can be found in dossier 25.4/100 vol 4. at NMFA, Oslo

¹⁹⁸ Letter, Somali Embassy to NMFA, 20 February 1984, 76.8/100, NMFA, Oslo

time the NMFA expressed intent for continued consideration of requests for assistance. However, the NMFA would specifically consider requests made by "Norwegian or international humanitarian organisations with which a successful cooperation relationship has been established."¹⁹⁹

In 1985, Somalia appointed a new ambassador to Norway. Ahmed Sheikh Mohamoud replaced Abdullahi Issa at the Stockholm Embassy. Mohamoud visited Norway in January, and like his predecessors, tried to make Norway engage more in Somalia by direct bilateral cooperation. However, he did not get any other answers than his predecessors.²⁰⁰ Mohamoud revisited Norway in 1986; this time, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Frydenlund. In this meeting, Mohamoud questioned Norway's reluctance to help Somalia, when the other Scandinavian countries gave aid. Mohamoud also wanted to increase trade between Norway and Somalia through cooperation. Frydenlund explained that it was not the Norwegian government that conducted trade, it was primarily private firms. In his opinion, if Somalia wanted to increase trade relations, Somalia would be better served to appoint an honorary consul amongst Norway's businessmen located in Norway. According to Mohamoud, Somalia had plans to do so.²⁰¹

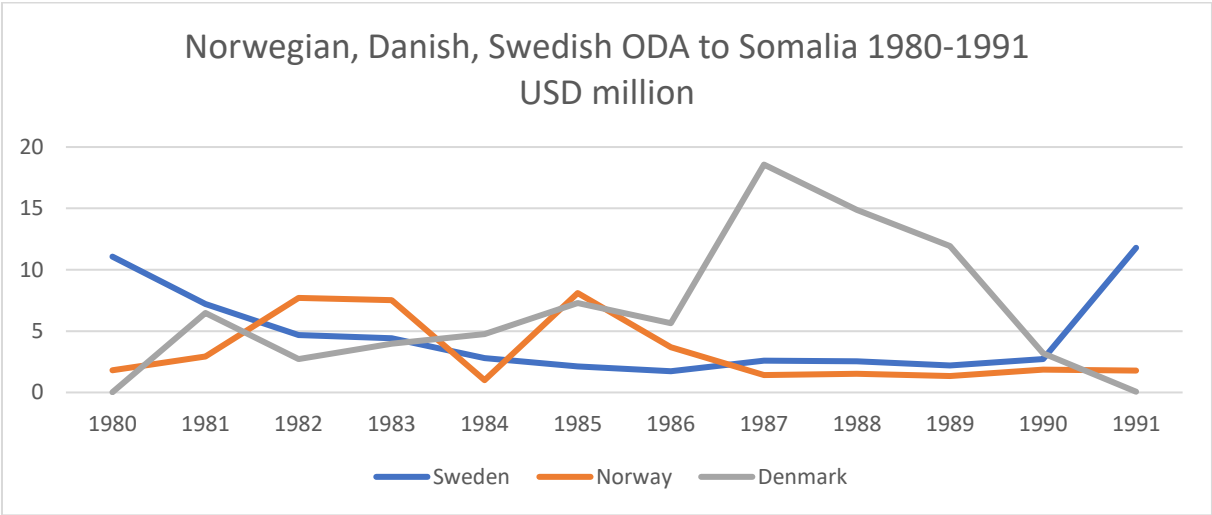


Figure 4: Source OECD. Total Net ODA from DAC countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark to Somalia 1980-1991.

OECD's statistics gives us an insight into Mohamouds claims. Most likely, Mohamoud pressed

¹⁹⁹ Letter, NMFA to Somali Embassy, 13 April 1984, 76.8/100, NMFA, Oslo
²⁰⁰ Minutes, «Besøk av Somalias nye ambassadør,...», 21 January 1985, 34.4/100, NMFA, Oslo
²⁰¹ Minutes, «Utenriksministerens samtale med Somalias Ambassadør», 30 January 1986, 34.4/100, NMFA, Oslo

the issue of Norwegian aid because Sweden and Denmark gave aid to government projects, whereas Norway only gave aid to multibid-projects, i.e. projects run by multilateral organisations. Until 1986, Norway's contributions were somewhere between, and sometimes equal to, Sweden and Denmark's contributions.

In 1988, Hassan Sheikh Hussein, who had been side accredited Somali ambassador to Norway for a year, was replaced by Yusuf Haji Said Mohamoud as ambassador.²⁰² Since Somalia's independence in 1960, Norway still had not appointed an ambassador to Somalia. Norway's closest thing to representation in Somalia was the consulate in Mogadishu, which the embassy in Nairobi supervised. The Norwegian Ambassador to Kenya did not have side accreditation in Somalia the same way that the Somali ambassador to Sweden had side accreditation in Norway. In 1989, the NMFA raised the matter internally to establish the ambassadorial connection to Somalia from Nairobi. The reason for this shift in policy had to do with the deteriorating situation in the region, and the increased amount of Somali refugees coming to Norway. Since 1980, immigrants from Somalia had increased in numbers, and because of the domestic troubles in Somalia, refugees would start coming to Norway in the 1980s.²⁰³

Since mid-1980, President Mohamed Siad Barre, de facto dictator in Somalia since 1969, waged war against the civilian population in Somalia, particularly the Isaaq-clan in the north. Refugees and immigrants had come from Somalia to Norway after the Ogaden-war, the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977-1978, but this changed in 1988 when more people fled the country to escape the civil war that had broken out after secessionists had captured Hargeisa and Siad Barre's regime bombed the city in retaliation. This internal strife escalated in 1988 into open civil war.²⁰⁴

The last interaction between the Somali Government and Norway was in 1989. In 1991 the state of Somalia collapsed, and the Norwegian ambassador in Nairobi did not get side accreditation in Somalia.

²⁰² Letter, NMFA to Somali Embassy, 20 September 1988, 14.2/100, NMFA, Oslo

²⁰³ Memorandum, «Somalia – Spørsmålet om sideakkreditering fra Nairobi», 9 August, 34.4/100, NMFA, Oslo

²⁰⁴ Ada Engebretsen and Gunhild Regland Farstad, *Somaliere i eksil i Norge: en kartlegging av erfaringer fra fem kommuner og åtte bydeler i Oslo*, vol. 1/2004, Notat (Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring : online) (Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring, 2004), 14.

Table 1: Somali immigrants to Norway 1970-1991, Source: SSB.no

	Innvandrere							
	1970	1980	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Menn								
Somalia	3	23	43	62	276	541	937	1 089
Kvinner								
Somalia	0	3	19	23	108	182	366	514

Multilateralism

From the 1970s, Norway continued its multilateral approach to Somalia and contributed to projects run by NGOs and multilateral organisations.

By 1980, Norway entered into a multi-bi-cooperation agreement with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), i.e. to fund specific projects run by ILO. One of the projects that Norway funded through this agreement was "Assistance to a Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the disabled in Mogadiscio, Somalia". This project aimed to train four instructors to teach disabled people and initiate carpentry, leatherworking and confection lessons. The contribution was counselling services and equipment delivery.²⁰⁵

One of the larger projects that Norway helped finance was to build a water supply to Mogadishu. This project was part of Norway's agreement with The World Bank, or more specifically, the International Development Association from the 1970s.²⁰⁶ The project received a contribution of USD 2.55 million.²⁰⁷

Norway also contributed to two projects run by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The first project was "Integration of Women in Agricultural and Rural Development", from 1980 to 1982. The FAO run the project, but it was co-financed by Norway

²⁰⁵ Note, «FN's internasjonale år for funksjonshemmede..», 5 May 1981, 76.14/100

²⁰⁶ See St. prp. Nr. 63 (1973-1974)

²⁰⁷ Letter, NMFA to Norges Bank, 25 April 1983, 42.12/100 vol 1, NMFA, Oslo

and Somalia.²⁰⁸ Norway also co-financed an FAO fertiliser project to study and appraise the feasibility of fertiliser usage. An FAO delegation was sent that found that a fertiliser programme in Somalia would be very effective in helping food production. However, this would only be viable with foreign assistance. Qatar had shown some interest in a joint venture with Norway concerning fertiliser usage in Somalia around the Shebelle river.²⁰⁹ Norway agreed to help finance the FAO fertiliser programme for its duration of five years.²¹⁰ The fertiliser programme turned out to be relatively successful for a couple of years. However, domestic unrest in Somalia halted any progress made and ultimately the programme was discontinued in 1988.²¹¹

An aspect of this project that went unnoticed by the FAO was the misconception that Somalia was ethnically homogenous. During colonial times, slaves had been brought from Tanzania to work on Italian plantations on the banks of the Shebelle river and Juba valley in southern Somalia.²¹² The descendants of these slaves became an unrecognised minority in Somalia. The Bantu-Somalis, as they became called, were first recognised in the 1990s. Sociologist Mohammed Eno details how the Bantu Somalis were a distinct group in Somalia who was oppressed throughout Somalia's history. Different Somali governments partook in land grabs against Bantu-Somali farmers. Whenever development funds for agricultural endeavours reached Somalia, it inevitably was detrimental to Bantu-Somali farmers. Either the Bantu-Somali farmers never benefited from the funds, or the funds proliferated the land grab efforts.²¹³ It is likely that the fertiliser programme by FAO was mainly beneficial to farmers who were not Bantu in origin and that Bantu-Somali farmers were ousted from their farms in preparation for agricultural development.

According to numbers from Norad's database, Norway would contribute to smaller projects and programmes throughout the 1980s, but the projects mentioned here were the only ones of any significance.

²⁰⁸ Letter appendix, FAO to NMFA, 27 May 1982, 50.8/30 100, NMFA Oslo

²⁰⁹ Letter, Norsk Hydro to NMFA, 9 February 1983, 50.8/30 100, NMFA Oslo

²¹⁰ Letter Appendix, FAO to NMFA "Plan of Operation", 11 August 1983, 50.8/30 100, NMFA Oslo

²¹¹ Report, Project progress report, 2 February 1987, 50.8/30 100, NMFA Oslo

²¹² Mohamed A. Eno, *The Bantu - Jareer Somali: Unearthing Apartheid in the Horn of Africa* (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2008), 107.

²¹³ Eno, *The Bantu - Jareer Somali*, 168–80.

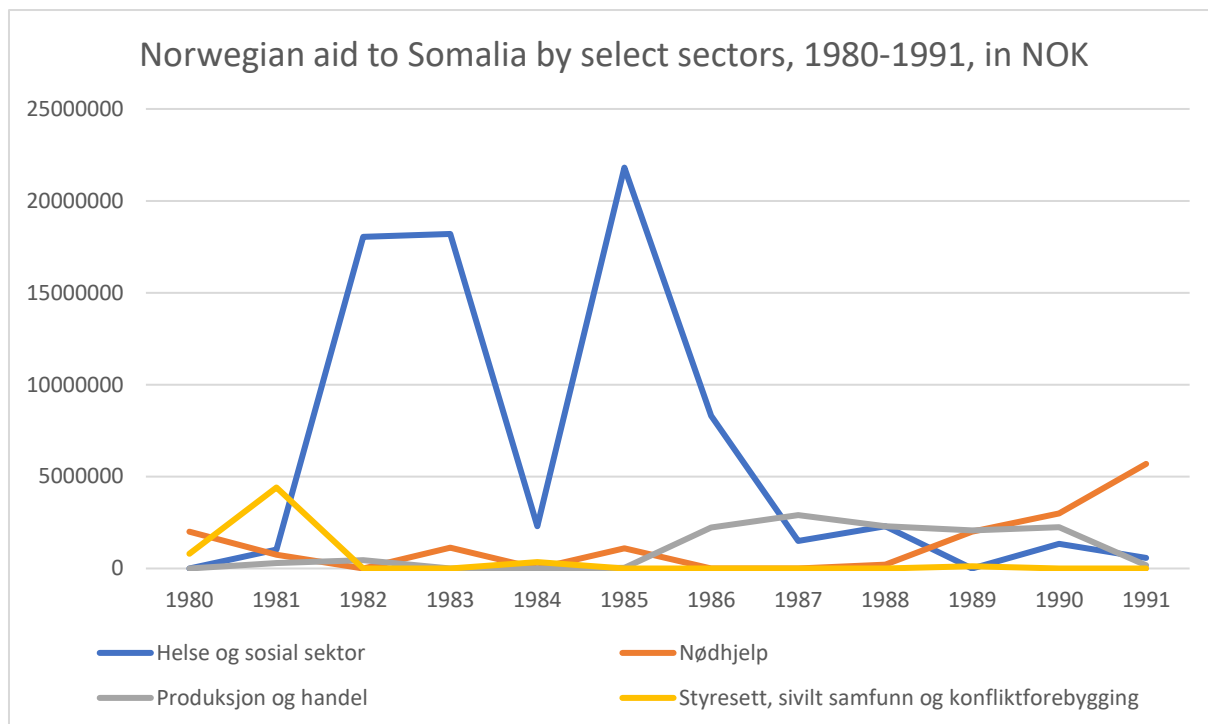


Figure 5: Source: Norad: Norwegian Earmarked Aid to Somalia by the four most significant sectors, 1980-1991. This figure does not include several sectors as they are insignificant amounts.

A New State, New Relations

Following the Hargeisa bombings in 1988, Barre lost control of Somalia, and oppositional groups took over. One of these oppositional groups was the Somali National Movement (SNM). This oppositional group had its headquarters in London and waged a campaign to earn recognition and support from the international community. The SNM had since its inception evolved into a more structured organisation, with the establishment of departments akin to a government. One of these departments was the Secretariat for Foreign Relations. In 1991, the SNM appealed to the then Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorvald Stoltenberg. The SNM claimed to have liberated Somalia from Barre and would establish "a stable decentralised broad based democracy." It would be a transitional process, wherein the SNM cautioned against recognising "any self-styled provisional government", appealed for freezing Somali public accounts in Norway, and petitioned "for the closing of the Somali embassy, and the protection of its assets until the appointment of emissaries by a representative government."²¹⁴ The letter

²¹⁴ Letter, SNM to Stoltenberg, 5 March 1991, 25.4/100, NMFA, Oslo

sent by the SNM was possibly the same as was sent to most governments, considering that the Somali embassy in question would be in Sweden. Furthermore, it is not known if there were any Somali public accounts in Norway at the time. There was no known reply.

In Norway, throughout the 1980s, the situation in Somalia became more visible in the media, and stories of the hardships would be published in Norwegian newspapers.²¹⁵ Some Somali refugees, who came to Norway, got permission to stay and began the road to citizenship.²¹⁶ SNM had a departement in Norway, the SNM Norway Branch, that eventually became a stronger presence in the Somali diaspora in Norway. In 1990, the SNM Norway Branch would hold a seminar and shortly after, they would meet with the NMFA. The meeting took place on 20 February, where SNM's Foreign Secretary Abdirahman Ahmed Ali would represent the SNM together with Ahmed Mohamed Mader, the Norwegian SNM branch leader, and two members of the SNM Support Committee in Norway, an organisationi working towards international recognition of Somaliland, Abdi Jama Awad and Ingrid Grude. During this meeting, the SNM representatives appealed for help for the refugees and displaced population in Somalia and express their gratitude that Norway had already accepted refugees. Ali requested that Norway avoided giving any aid to Barre directly since there was no guarantee that it would be used for its intended purposes. Instead, Norway should channel any aid through the UN to make sure the aid was beneficial to the refugees and to use its influence within the UN to make it so.²¹⁷

After Mogadishu was taken over by oppositional groups and Barre fled the country in 1991, the northern region of Somaliland, which was by now the stronghold of the SNM in Somalia, decided to secede. The NMFA received a request by the SNM Norway Branch to formally recognise the Republic of Somaliland as a sovereign state.²¹⁸ The first response by the NMFA was that it would not recognise Somaliland.²¹⁹ Later that year, Somaliland's appointed Foreign Minister Yousef Sheik Madar visited Norway on a trip to Europe to meet with NMFA. During

²¹⁵ *Fredriksstad Blad 1989.01.14, Fredriksstad Blad 1989*, Fredriksstad Blad (Norge;Viken;;Fredrikstad;;;, 1989), 24–25, https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_fredriksstadblad_null_null_19890114_101_12_1; *Strandbuen 1988.04.13, Strandbuen 1988*, Strandbuen (Norge;Rogaland;;Strand;;;, 1988), 3, https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_strandbuen_null_null_19880413_25_27_1.

²¹⁶ Svein Walstad, 'Våre hjerter er i Somalia', *Aust-Agder Blad 1989*, Aust-Agder Blad, 18 July 1989, 6–7, https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digavis_austagderblad_null_null_19890718_123_74_1.

²¹⁷ Minutes, SNM representatives and NMFA, 22 February 1990, 34.4/100 vol 2, NMFA, Oslo

²¹⁸ Letter, SNM Norway Branch to NMFA, 4 July 1991, 34.4/100 vol 2, NMFA, Oslo

²¹⁹ Note, «Besøk av utenriksminister for Republikken Somaliland.», 21 July 1991, 34.4/100 vol 2, NMFA, Oslo

this meeting, Madar claimed that all foreign aid to Somalia through the years was concentrated geographically to the southern parts of Somalia, i.e. the regions formerly part of the Italian colony, while the north, i.e. Somaliland, received nothing under Barre. According to Madar, Somaliland did not wish for emergency aid. Instead, they wanted economic aid to revitalise the economy. Madar talked about inviting the private sector to invest in Somaliland. He argued that it would be safe since Somaliland was now considered risk free. The NMFA would not promise anything beyond conveying the message to relevant actors, whoever they might be.²²⁰

Norway did not have any relation with the different groups vying for control of Mogadishu but would interact with the SNM and groups supporting them in Norway. In 1994, the NMFA got a visit from a Somaliland delegation. The meeting was similar to the one that had been held 1991. Aside from the usual talks about investments and aid, the meeting turned to the political situation, Somalilands secession, and the relation to southern Somalia. The NMFA wanted to know if any government in southern Somalia would recognise and acknowledge an independent Somaliland. The delegation would answer that southern Somalia was a long way from having a government and that it was essential for them to institutionalise and reinforce Somaliland's independence and stability in the meantime. The minutes of this meeting took care to put inverted commas around titles and names related to Somaliland to avoid acknowledging Somaliland claims. The meeting participants did not bring up the matter of Norway recognising Somaliland as an independent state.²²¹

²²⁰ Minutes, «Somaliland. Møte med Somaliands «utenriksminister» Yousef Sheik Ali Sheik Madar...», 16 September, 34.4/100, NMFA, Oslo

²²¹ Minutes, «Besøk av «ministerdelegasjon»...», 15 February 1994, 34.4/100 vol 2, NMFA, Oslo

Norway in Somalia after the state collapse

After three decades of independent existence, the state of Somalia collapsed and splintered into a multitude of factions. The only Somali faction Norway had any contact with was the Somali National Movement (SNM) that had seized control of Somaliland and announced its secession from the rest of Somalia. However, even though the state was no longer in existence, Norway engaged in activities in Somalia. After Barre was ousted in 1991 and the subsequent power vacuum led to a devastating civil war, The UN Security Council adopted resolution 751 in 1992 that established the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I), that was mandated to facilitate, provide, and secure humanitarian relief in Somalia, and monitor a UN-brokered ceasefire in Somalia.²²²

The UN contacted Norway's UN delegation in New York and, unofficially and verbally, requested that Norway supply a company of military staff to UNOSOM I. Shortly after, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and the NMFA accepted the request and was able to deploy a company in January of 1993. However, by the time the company arrived in Mogadishu, the nature of UNOSOM I had changed. The mandate of UNOSOM I had gone from peacekeeping to standby engagement, whereas a now UN-mandated US force (Unified Task Force, UNITAF) took the reins. The Norwegians preparation had not included this change in plans, and when the company arrived in Mogadishu, they were severely unprepared for the tasks that waited them. This mission ran over a period of four months from January to April in 1993. In May, the UN mandated a new operation, UNOSOM II which replaced both UNOSOM I and UNITAF. UNOSOM II was mandated to establish peace and to engage in 'nation building'. This operation ultimately failed. Instead of building peace and nation, the operation antagonised factions in Somalia and provoked violence against UNOSOM II forces, including Norwegian soldiers. Following the event known as 'the Battle of Mogadishu' where over a thousand people died, most of UNOSOM II's contributors, including Norway, decided to withdraw from Somalia.²²³

²²² Security Council resolution 751 (1992)

²²³ Martin Lau Slåtten, 'Norges Bidrag Til FN- Operasjonene i Somalia', n.d., 5-6.

Chapter 5 -

Norwegian foreign policy and development aid

Looking at Norway's relations with Somalia, many questions arise. Why was Somalia not chosen as a partner country in the 1970s and 1980s? Was Somalia even eligible according to the principles and guidelines for development aid? Why was Norway reluctant to deal with Somalia? It is necessary to look at the change in policies and guidelines set down by parliament throughout the decades to understand the apprehensive nature of Norwegian attitude toward Somalia in the 1970s and 1980s.

Furthermore, one can look at Norway's contextual understanding of Somalia and the situation in the Horn of Africa. Another important aspect of Norwegian attitude towards Somalia could be Norway's relations with the US and the USSR. The available archival material leaves much speculation, and there are very few conclusive answers to these questions. However, it is possible to extrapolate some likelihoods from the sources in conjunction with some existing literature. The short answer is that Norway's development aid policy guidelines did not, in practice, factor heavily into evaluating Somalia as a possible new partner country; instead, the guidelines made it easier to reject Somalia before any evaluation. Furthermore, Cold War dynamics probably factored into Norway's political attitude towards Somalia. When exploring these matters, more questions arise.

Were there similar cases where the Norwegians outright denied the possibility of initiating long-term bilateral cooperation and avoided political affiliation? I do not know if there are any identical cases, but some share similarities in how they were dealt with. Norway had had cooperative relations with Ethiopia, helping with building their marine up until 1966, and Norwegian NGO's had worked in Ethiopia prior to this. After the Derg government in Ethiopia aligned with the Soviets, Norway found it hard to support them politically.

Why not Somalia?

Why was not Somalia chosen as a partner country in the 1970s? The simple answer given by the NMFA in 1974 was that they considered the language barrier the main issue for Norway to engage in any cooperation with Somalia.²²⁴ However, it is likely that more factors played into the decision-making. As seen with the later choice of Mozambique as a partner country, language was not necessarily an issue in choosing partner countries.

In 1972, Norway had development partnerships with Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia in Africa. In that same year, Norway chose Botswana as a new partner country.²²⁵ By 1977, the list of partner countries also included Mozambique. Somali ambassador Ahmed Haji Dualeh visited Norway in 1972 and 1974. In 1974, Somalia was on the Least Developed Countries (LDC) list and the Most Severely Affected (MSA) list. Botswana was on the LDC list; however, Mozambique was on neither.²²⁶

Table 2 Least Developed Countries 1971²²⁷

African countries	Botswana, Burundi, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Tanzania, Uganda, Burkina Faso.
Asian Countries	Afghanistan, Bhutan, Laos, Maldives, Nepal, Sikkim, Western-Samoa, Yemen
Latin-American countries	Haiti

Table 3 List of MSA countries 1974²²⁸

Bangladesh, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Dahomey, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Khmer republic, Lesotho, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Mauratania, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri-Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Yemen
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²²⁴ See chapter 3.

²²⁵ Ruud and Kjerland, *1975-1989*, 2:251.

²²⁶ St. Meld. nr 29 (1971-1972):

²²⁷ St. Meld nr. 94 (1974-1975), 74

²²⁸ St. Meld nr. 94 (1974-1975), 74

The reasons for choosing the initial countries for partnerships came down to practical reasons. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were anglophone, and the administrative apparatuses were relatively well developed. Norway discontinued the partnership with Uganda in 1973 as a consequence of Idi Amin's dictatorial rule in Uganda.²²⁹ In 1977, Norway made the controversial choice of Mozambique as a new partner country.²³⁰ A thesis written in 2020 about certain choices of partner countries in relation to the principles and guidelines of Norwegian development aid argues that in relation to the principle of geographical concentration, Mozambique was a natural choice for a partner country due to several factors. Firstly, Norway's existing relations to the region of South-East Africa, having several partner countries in that region. Secondly, the cooperative relationship between Mozambique and Tanzania, of which the latter was already one of Norway's partner countries. Thirdly, administratively it was easier.²³¹

The criteria for choosing partner countries were not formulated and accepted by the Storting before 1973. In 1973, the criteria were that the country in question had to have development-oriented and socially just policies that would benefit all layers of the population. This formulation was revised in 1976 to include that the country in question had to be part of the LDC list. However, these criteria were formulated after the selection of most partner countries and, in practice, did not factor heavily into the choices made.²³²

In Somalia's case, when they requested that Norway engage more in Somalia in the early 1970s, the Somali ambassador received different explanations for Norway's rejection. At first, Norway responded by saying that they were not going to expand their list of partner countries due to the principle of geographical concentration of the development aid. The other explanation he received was that Norway considered language a barrier to cooperation.²³³ The question arises though: Did Somalia fit with the criteria for selecting partner countries?

²²⁹ Tamnes, *Oljealder*, 6:401.

²³⁰ Stokke, *Norsk utviklingsbistand*, 36.

²³¹ Malene J. Aase, 'From Development Aid to Development Policy: Following the Norwegian Guidelines and Criteria Set for Main Partners of Development Cooperation - the Choice of Mozambique and Sri Lanka in 1977' (Oslo, Norway, University of Oslo, 2020), 100, <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/79919/9014---HIS4090---Master-thesis.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>.

²³² Stokke, *Norsk utviklingsbistand*, 48.

²³³ See chapter 3

In the early 1970s, Siad Barre initiated several socially just programs aimed at increasing literacy levels, furthering gender equality, and implementing policies that, on paper, were development-oriented.²³⁴ Furthermore, Somalia was geographically close to the other partner countries, even bordering Kenya, the country that was receiving the largest portions of Norwegian development aid. On paper, it seems like Somalia fits the criteria for the selection of partner countries. However, this is a very shallow look at the situation in the early 1970s.

Norway had close to no understanding of the country; besides, Somalia was an irredentist nation, targeting areas in Kenya that put them at odds with Kenya. It is also likely that when Somalia entered into a "friendship treaty" with the USSR in 1974, they were instantly disqualified from being considered a cooperation partner. Norway was a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and I believe it could not have been politically viable to choose Somalia as a partner country, as Somalia was then an ally of the USSR.

Somalia was one of the locations where the West bloc and East bloc vied for influence. When Siad Barre took over Somalia in 1969, he aligned himself with the East bloc even though he would proclaim that Somalia was neutral on the world stage and open to cooperation with anyone. From 1974 until 1977, Somalia mainly received aid from the USSR before the USSR chose to support Ethiopia instead of Somalia in the Ogaden war. The Ogaden war did not endear Somalia to the international community, and when Siad Barre expelled the Soviets from Somalia and broke their USSR relation, they were without a patron until 1980.²³⁵

Norway's main concern during this conflict was the well-being of Kenya, and as the Somali irredentism in the Ogaden continued, it made no sense to support Somalia. During the war, Norway did not have any national interest of significance in Somalia. Norway did have some national interests in Ethiopia, and many Norwegian citizens lived there at the time. It might have made sense to support Ethiopia. However, as Ethiopia was allied with the USSR, they were considered an enemy of NATO, which made it unacceptable for Norway to support Ethiopia.²³⁶

²³⁴ See chapter 2

²³⁵ See Chapter 2 for more on Somali international relations.

²³⁶ Christine Smith-Simonsen, 'Eritrea i våre hjerter? En studie av norske relasjoner til Eritrea.', 16 February 2007, 234, <https://munin.uit.no/handle/10037/598>.

When the Ogaden war ended in 1978 and Somalia later in 1980 secured financial aid from the US in return for port rights in Berbera, it seemed like a connection with Somalia might have had political value for Norway, but at that time, Norway was not interested in any development cooperation with Somalia. The evaluation within the NMFA was that the two were interlinked, and so to avoid any commitment to development cooperation, they avoided the political connection by refusing to accept a visit by Siad Barre.²³⁷ At that point in time, Norway's understanding of Somalia was that Siad Barre was a bellicose irredentist ruler and a direct threat to Kenya.

Despite the refusal to engage bilaterally with and within Somalia, Norway still funded some multilateral efforts within Somalia. The first contribution in 1975 was to the multilateral emergency response to the Dabadheer drought that happened in 1974. Later, any requests from multilateral organisations were usually accepted. However, long-term cooperation with the Somali state was something the NMFA did not want.

Another aspect of Norwegian aid is that often it was the driving force of individuals that led to cooperation with other countries outside the principle of geographical concentration. Ruud and Kjerland write about how Norwegian ministers who had gone on trips to foreign lands came back and asked for an evaluation of a multitude of projects by Norad. Often, ministers skipped evaluation from Norad and impulsively pledged aid to projects in some countries based on political reasons. According to Borger Length, director of Norad from 1982 to 1986, Jamaica and Portugal were examples of this after they became partner countries in practice after personal initiatives.²³⁸ In the 1970s, no Norwegian minister visited Somalia, and even though the honorary vice-consul Arne Bjørgung had resided in Somalia since 1959, he never had the political influence in Norway to secure any funding for projects in Somalia. However, Bjørgung's efforts were concentrated more on enticing Norwegian entrepreneurs to invest in Somalia rather than securing financing for aid projects. Another question arises from this, was Bjørgung an outlier in the field, or were there several failed attempts by individuals to make Norway and Norwegians engage in a country? The majority of historiography on Norwegian aid explores the successful ventures to establish cooperation between Norway and its partner countries and leaves out the unsuccessful cases. This is a topic that would be interesting to

²³⁷ See chapter 3

²³⁸ Ruud and Kjerland, *1975-1989*, 2:231.

explore further, as it could give a more nuanced look into Norway's diplomatic interactions in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1980s, Siad Barre became increasingly authoritarian, and many human rights violations were carried out by his regime against political opponents. The diplomatic interactions between Norway and Somalia occurred even less frequently than they had in the 1970s. Furthermore, more news outlets had started to report on Barre's increasingly authoritarian rule. After the civil war had forced many Somalis to flee the country, some of the refugees came to Norway, which prompted the NMFA to consider establishing an embassy in Somalia for better communication concerning the Somali refugees that came to Norway.

Throughout the 1980s, Siad Barre was beset by many sides, and his efforts were focused on domestic control and further centralisation of power. In the latter part of the 1980s, domestic unrest in Somalia occupied Barre's attention, and at least in the case of Norway, the Somali attempts at diplomatic interactions to either better relations or solicit development aid ceased.

By 1980, it was clear to the NMFA that Siad Barre was not someone they wanted close cooperation with, despite the increased US interest in the region. However, multilateral organisations continued to receive aid for projects in Somalia. In the 1980s, Norwegian attention was more focused on the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict. In 1985, this was especially the case when a drought struck the entire Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Somalia – a singular case of rejection or a representative one?

As mentioned above, the principle of geographical concentration was repeatedly ignored, and Norway gave development aid to many countries despite the principle. A multitude of countries received aid in a smaller capacity, and some countries became unofficial partner countries. The historiography on Norway's aid history and particularly the main partner countries has been proliferated extensively throughout the decades. However, one of the lesser researched areas of this field is the countries that were not partner countries yet received aid and tried to solicit aid on a bilateral basis, and Norway's relation to these countries. The case of Somalia can be seen as one of these cases. In this case, the principles of geographically concentrated aid seem to have in practice given Norway the opportunity to reject Somalia from the outset rather than have it fulfil the criteria. The question arises if this was the case for other countries trying to solicit aid. Is the case of development aid to Somalia representative of other cases of Norwegian rejection? Furthermore, was Norway similarly reluctant to deal politically with other countries in the same way as with Somalia?

The most obvious comparison is the case of Ethiopia, where research is available. In her doctoral thesis, Christine Smith-Simonsen explores the Norwegian relation to the Eritrean freedom movement from the 1970s until Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. The Eritreans were fighting for independence from Ethiopia, and Norway chose in the end to support the independence movement. In her research, aside from the Norwegian-Eritrean relation, she explores the conflict in the Horn of Africa, emphasising Ethiopia and Eritrea. The research includes source material that tells of similar diplomatic interactions as with the Somalis. The Ethiopians aligned with the Soviet bloc in 1974 and received aid from the USSR. This aid was primarily military, with minimal humanitarian aid. In 1981, the Ethiopians sent out a governmental delegation on a trip to western countries specifically to secure long-term development aid; the Scandinavian countries were of high priority. A request to receive the delegation was sent to Norway but Norway refused. After refusing many similar earlier requests, Sweden decided to accept the delegation. Norway and the other Scandinavian countries decided to do the same in light of Sweden's decision.²³⁹

²³⁹ Smith-Simonsen, 'Eritrea i våre hjerter?', 234.

The Ethiopian delegation met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Frydenlund, and one of the central topics of the meeting was the possibility of development aid. Frydenlund promptly rejected the idea of making Ethiopia a partner country, citing the principle of geographical concentration. However, Frydenlund pledged to continue contributing aid to Ethiopia through Non-Governmental organisations.²⁴⁰

There were other African countries that sought out Norwegian bilateral aid cooperation that were rejected as well. The most prominent examples are some countries in the Sahel region in West Africa. Niger had on several occasions requested bilateral development aid from Norway in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁴¹ In an official meeting in 1975, between Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Frydenlund and Niger's Minister of Foreign Affairs Adamou, the possibility of aid was rejected.²⁴² The same was the case for Mali's requests for bilateral cooperation in the 1970s. However, in the case of the Sahel countries, it was decided in 1974-1975 that all aid to the Sahel countries was to be channelled through UN institutions.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Smith-Simonsen, 'Eritrea i våre hjerter?', 236.

²⁴¹ Note, «Niger – anmodninger om norsk utviklingsbistand», 21 March 1972, L1860, UD, RA, Oslo, Norway

²⁴² Conversation minutes, between Frydenlund and Adamou, 21 October 1975, L1860, UD, RA, Oslo, Norway

²⁴³ Memorandum, «Skogprosjektet i Mali», 28 September 1977, L1858, UD, RA, Oslo, Norway

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In more recent white papers, it is stated that Norway has had bilateral relations with Somalia since Somalia's independence. This statement is accurate. However, it does not entirely tell us anything about the nature of the relationship. Stating that one state has had bilateral relations with another means that the state recognises and acknowledges the other state's sovereignty. In the recent white papers, where the Norwegian government points to the historical connection between Norway and Somalia, it is implied that Norway did not have much to do with Somalia before the 1990s. This is also correct, to a certain degree. However, the thirty-one years of bilateral relations do not get explained or elaborated upon, and the white papers do not indicate if these bilateral relations were amicable or hostile.

The findings in this thesis paints a slightly different picture of Norway-Somalia relations than the current white papers imply. Throughout the thesis, it becomes clear that Norway as a state never had an amicable relationship with Somalia. Furthermore, it seems as if more questions than answers crop up about Norwegian-Somali interactions and relations.

History does link Norway and Somalia together since the end of the Italian trusteeship over Somalia, with the Norwegian Trygve Halvdan Lie being central in the negotiations between Ethiopia and Italia over the Ogaden province. This mediation role is also possibly the first documented event where Somalis interacted with Norwegians.

In 1960, when Somalia gained its independence, Norway recognised Somalia as an independent and sovereign state.

Throughout the 1960s, Norway was occupied with other matters. Although the Norwegian Arne Bjørgung, United Nations expert from 1959 until 1967, really tried to make Oslo interested in the case of Somalia, Norway remained uninterested. Norwegian actors in the private sector were not very interested in Somalia either. However, this decade saw the establishment of a consulate, which became the only Norwegian representation in Somalia for thirty years.

From 1965 and onwards, Bjørgung managed to establish modest trade between Somalia and Norway. This trade consisted of imports of furniture and Ringnes beer to Somalia from Norway.

In the 1970s, Norwegian actors' interest in Somalia rose slightly, and Somalia actively tried to establish better relations with Norway. On Somali initiative, Somalia established an embassy in Sweden where the resident ambassador received side accreditation in the other Scandinavian countries as well, including Norway. From this embassy, the different Somali ambassadors, at sporadic intervals, contacted the Norwegian government to either ask for development aid or inquire about the possibility of top-level state visits from Somalia.

According to Norad's statistics, Norway's first bilateral contribution to Somalia was in 1977. These statistics are not correct. Norway's first bilateral contribution was a multi-bi contribution in 1975 to fund the transportation of medicinal supplies in the aftermath of the Dabadheer drought.

Throughout the 1970s, Norway rejected any requests for direct bilateral development aid from Somali representatives. The constant rejections were rooted in Norway's policy that, in theory, determined that Norway should concentrate its aid to achieve more effective use of the aid.

In the 1970s, the Norwegian state interacted with Somali representatives rarely. In general, the only Norwegian to interact with Somalis regularly was Arne Bjørgung, which the NMFA made an honorary vice-consul under honorary consul Ali Sheikh Mohamed.

Norwegian exports to Somalia saw a significant rise from 1970 to 1975. However, after 1975, trade was non-existent between Norway and Somalia due to financial hardships in Somalia following the Dabadheer drought.

During the Ogaden war, Norway officially took a neutral stance and supported neither Ethiopia nor Somalia. Technically, Norway was neutral. However, Norway did not support Somalia because Kenya, a main partner country of Norway, felt threatened by Somalia. Generally, Norway claimed that the Ogaden war could only be resolved satisfactorily within the Organisation of African Unity and that superpowers and external forces should stay out of the conflict.

In the aftermath of the Ogaden war, Norway contributed humanitarian aid at the request of the UNHCR.

In the 1980s, once more Somalia tried to obtain direct bilateral aid from Norway. Norway did not pledge any bilateral aid directly to the Somali government. However, Norway pledged to channel aid to Somalia through multilateral channels.

Norway contributed to two large-scale projects in Somalia in the 1980s, a waterworks project in Mogadishu in 1982 and a fertilizer programme from 1985 to 1987. The fertilizer programme was discontinued when the civil war broke out in 1988.

Interaction between the state of Norway and Somalia was minimal in the 1980s. Norwegians in the private sector interacted more with Somalis than the state.

In the 1980s, very few Norwegians, aside from Arne Bjørgung, lived in Somalia. These Norwegian expatriates were affiliated with the Norwegian Red Cross.

Somali migrants had moved to Norway in the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, the number of migrants and refugees from Somalia that moved to Norway increased slightly. At the end of the decade in 1988, when the Somali civil war broke out, the number of refugees that fled Somalia and moved to Norway increased significantly.

When the region of Somaliland seceded from the rest of Somalia and declared itself an independent state, it sought recognition internationally. Some Somalis in Norway campaigned to make Norway recognise and acknowledge Somaliland as an independent state.

From 1985 to 1989, Norway had minimal contact with the Somali embassy in Sweden, only exchanging procedural notes on staff changes.

To conclude, the relationship between Norway and Somalia was not a particularly amicable one. Instead, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo more often gave Somalia a cold shoulder. After Somalia's independence, Norway could not care less about Somalia for approximately ten years, and Norway rejected cooperation with Somalia for approximately twenty years from 1972 and onwards.

In the 1990s, Norway took an interest in Somalia when international cooperation in the form of UNOSOM was initiated. Then, it was the UN that requested Norway to contribute with military resources to help establish peace in Somalia. As opposed to Somalia, the United Nations has always been a cornerstone in Norwegian foreign policy.

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