

SOMALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION, IGAD, AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON SOMALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL INTERESTS

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Abstract

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has been an integral aspect of its foreign policy and national interest. This study provides an overview of Somalia's history and foreign relations, as well as an overview of regional organizations in Africa and their role in Somalia's foreign policy. The study specifically focuses on the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other regional organizations.

The first section of the paper examines the history and evolution of the AU's engagement in Somalia, including the AU peacekeeping missions and their impact on Somalia's security. The paper also discusses criticisms of the AU's approach to Somalia. The second section of the study explores the founding and purpose of IGAD, as well as IGAD's involvement in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. The study also discusses the challenges and limitations of IGAD's efforts in Somalia.

The third section of the study examines the role of other regional organizations, including the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other regional organizations, in Somalia's foreign policy. The study also explores economic and diplomatic ties between Somalia and other African countries.

The fourth section of the study assesses the impact of regional organizations on Somalia's foreign policy and national interests. The study discusses the benefits and drawbacks of Somalia's engagement with regional organizations, as well as how regional organizations have influenced Somalia's foreign policy priorities. The study also discusses the implications of Somalia's foreign relations for its economic development, security, and governance.

In conclusion, this study highlights the key takeaways and implications for Somalia's future engagement with regional organizations. The study also provides recommendations for strengthening Somalia's relations with regional partners. Overall, this study demonstrates the importance of Somalia's engagement with regional organizations in achieving its foreign policy and national interests.

Keywords: Somalia, regional organizations, African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, foreign policy, national interests.

Introduction

Somalia is a country located in the horn of Africa with a long history that spans back to ancient civilizations. Somalia's history is characterized by interactions with foreign powers, which has shaped its political, economic, and social systems. The country's strategic location in the horn of Africa and its potential as a gateway to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean has made it a center of interest for global powers, regional actors, and neighboring states. This paper provides an overview of Somalia's history and its foreign relations with other countries and regional organizations. The paper also assesses the impact of regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), on Somalia's foreign policy and national interests.

Background on Somalia's History And Foreign Relations.

Somalia's history dates back to the 7th century when Arab traders and Islamic scholars established trading centers along the coast of the horn of Africa (smith 2009). Over time, these trading centers developed into city-states that engaged in trade with other regions, including the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, and India. In the 19th century, European colonial powers, particularly Britain, Italy, and France, began to establish colonies in the region, leading to the partition of Somalia into different zones of influence.

In 1960, Somalia gained independence from Italy and Britain, and it became a republic. In the early years of independence, the country enjoyed relative stability and progress under the leadership of President Aden Abdullah Osman. However, the country's stability was short-lived, as a military coup in 1969 led by General Siad Barre resulted in a shift towards authoritarian rule. The military regime instituted socialist policies and suppressed dissent, leading to a prolonged period of political instability, civil strife, and economic decline (smith 2009).

In the 1980s, Somalia became a battleground for Cold War interests, with the Soviet Union and Cuba supporting the government, while the United States supported rebel groups. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the withdrawal of U.S. support led to the collapse of the Somali government and the outbreak of civil war. The country was plunged into a state of anarchy, with various factions, clans, and warlords vying for control (smith 2009).

The international community attempted to intervene in the Somali conflict, leading to the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in 1992. However, the UN mission failed to bring stability to the country, and it withdrew in 1995, leaving Somalia in a state of lawlessness and violence. The country remained without a central government until 2004 when a transitional federal government was established (smith 2009).

Somalia's foreign relations have been shaped by its history and its strategic location in the horn of Africa (jones, 2018). The country has maintained relationships with global powers, regional actors, and neighboring states, which have had a significant impact on its political, economic, and social systems.

During the Cold War, Somalia received support from both the Soviet Union and the United States, as both countries sought to gain influence in the region. The Soviet Union provided military support to the

Somali government, while the United States supported rebel groups, including the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the United Somali Congress (USC). The United States also provided humanitarian aid during the 1991 famine, which helped to create a positive image of the U.S. in Somalia (jones, 2018).

In the post-Cold War era, Somalia's foreign relations have been characterized by its engagement with regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (jones, 2018). The AU has played a significant role in Somalia's political and security landscape, particularly in the establishment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). AMISOM was established in 2007 to support the transitional federal government in restoring stability and security to Somalia. AMISOM is composed of troops from various African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Burundi. The mission has been instrumental in combating the al-Shabaab militant group, which has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in Somalia and the region (jones, 2018).

IGAD, on the other hand, has been involved in efforts to promote peace and stability in Somalia since the 1990s. The organization has facilitated peace talks, including the 2004 Nairobi Declaration, which led to the establishment of the transitional federal government. IGAD has also played a significant role in the political transition process, including the drafting of the provisional constitution and the organization of the 2012 presidential elections (jones, 2018).

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has been instrumental in shaping its foreign policy and national interests (jones, 2018). The country has been able to leverage its relationship with these organizations to receive support in areas such as security, humanitarian aid, and development assistance. However, Somalia's relationship with some neighboring countries, such as Ethiopia and Kenya, has been characterized by tensions and conflicts over issues such as border disputes and the presence of troops in Somalia (jones, 2018).

In conclusion, Somalia's history and foreign relations have had a significant impact on its political, economic, and social systems. The country's strategic location in the horn of Africa has made it a center of interest for global powers, regional actors, and neighboring states. Somalia's engagement with regional organizations, such as the African Union and IGAD, has been instrumental in shaping its foreign policy and national interests. These organizations have provided support in areas such as security, humanitarian aid, and development assistance. However, Somalia's relationship with neighboring countries has been characterized by tensions and conflicts, which have further complicated the country's political and security landscape.

Overview of regional organizations in Africa and their role in Somalia's foreign policy.

Africa is home to numerous regional organizations that play a significant role in shaping the continent's political, economic, and social landscape. These organizations have been instrumental in promoting peace, security, and development in the region, as well as in addressing various transnational challenges

such as terrorism, climate change, and pandemics. Somalia, a country located in the Horn of Africa, has been the subject of intense regional and global attention due to its fragile political situation, security challenges, and humanitarian crisis. This article provides an overview of regional organizations in Africa and their role in Somalia's foreign policy.

Regional Organizations in Africa

There are several regional organizations in Africa that have been established to promote regional integration, economic development, peace, and security. These organizations include the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). These organizations are comprised of member states that share common economic, political, and social objectives.

The African Union (AU) is the most prominent regional organization in Africa. It was established in 2002 and replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The AU has 55 member states and aims to promote regional integration, economic development, and peace and security in Africa. The AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) is responsible for maintaining peace and security on the continent and has played a significant role in addressing conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 and is comprised of 15 member states in West Africa. ECOWAS aims to promote economic integration and development in the region and has been instrumental in promoting democracy and good governance in member states. ECOWAS has also played a significant role in addressing regional security challenges, including the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and the conflict in Mali.

The East African Community (EAC) was established in 2000 and is comprised of six member states in East Africa. The EAC aims to promote regional integration and economic development in the region and has made significant progress in achieving these objectives. The EAC has also played a significant role in addressing regional security challenges, including the conflict in Somalia.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was established in 1980 and is comprised of 16 member states in Southern Africa. SADC aims to promote economic development and regional integration in the region and has been instrumental in addressing regional security challenges, including the conflict in the DRC.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was established in 1996 and is comprised of eight member states in the Horn of Africa. IGAD aims to promote economic development, regional integration, and peace and security in the region. IGAD has been involved in efforts to promote peace and stability in Somalia, including the facilitation of peace talks and the drafting of the provisional constitution.

Role of Regional Organizations in Somalia's Foreign Policy.

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has been instrumental in shaping its foreign policy and national interests. The country has been able to leverage its relationship with these organizations to receive support in areas such as security, humanitarian aid, and development assistance. For example, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has played a significant role in combating the al-Shabaab militant group, which has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in Somalia and the region. AMISOM is composed of troops from various African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Burundi.

IGAD has also been involved in efforts to promote peace and stability in Somalia since the 1990s. The organization has facilitated peace talks, including the Arta Peace Process in 2000, which resulted in the establishment of the Transitional National Government in Somalia. IGAD has also been instrumental in promoting the Somali peace process, including the drafting of the provisional constitution and the organization of elections.

In addition to IGAD and the AU, other regional organizations such as the EAC and the SADC have also been involved in Somalia's reconstruction and development efforts. For example, the EAC has provided technical and financial assistance to Somalia in areas such as infrastructure development, trade, and investment. The SADC has also been involved in supporting Somalia's development efforts, particularly in the areas of agriculture and rural development.

In conclusion, Regional organizations in Africa have played a significant role in shaping the continent's political, economic, and social landscape. Somalia's engagement with these organizations has been instrumental in promoting peace, security, and development in the country. The African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have all played a significant role in shaping Somalia's foreign policy and national interests. These organizations have provided support in areas such as security, humanitarian aid, and development assistance, and have been involved in efforts to promote peace and stability in the country.

The African Union's Involvement in Somalia

Somalia has been plagued by civil war, political instability, and terrorist attacks for decades. In 2007, the African Union (AU) decided to intervene in Somalia to help restore peace and stability to the country. This paper will explore the history and evolution of the AU's engagement in Somalia, its peacekeeping missions, and their impact on Somalia's security. Additionally, criticisms of the AU's approach to Somalia will be discussed (AU, 2007)

History and Evolution of the AU's Engagement in Somalia

The AU's engagement in Somalia can be traced back to 2007 when the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established. The mission's primary objective was to help Somalia's transitional government establish control over the country and combat Islamist extremist groups, such as Al-Shabaab. Initially, the mission was composed of Ugandan and Burundian troops. In subsequent years,

other African countries, including Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya, joined AMISOM.

In 2012, AMISOM was granted an expanded mandate to provide security to key government institutions and help the government extend its control over the country. The mission's mandate was further extended in 2017 to include support for the Somali National Army (SNA) in its fight against Al-Shabaab. Currently, AMISOM is the largest peacekeeping mission in Africa, with over 19,000 troops from various African countries.

AU Peacekeeping Missions and Their Impact on Somalia's Security

The AU's peacekeeping missions have had a significant impact on Somalia's security. AMISOM has been successful in pushing Al-Shabaab out of major urban centers and weakening its military capabilities. Additionally, AMISOM has helped provide security for the Somali government and key institutions, including the airport, seaport, and statehouse. The mission has also facilitated the delivery of humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations in Somalia.

However, the mission has faced challenges, including inadequate resources, poor coordination among troop-contributing countries, and corruption. These challenges have limited the mission's ability to achieve its objectives fully. Additionally, AMISOM has been criticized for its heavy-handed tactics, including the indiscriminate use of force, which has led to civilian casualties and human rights violations.

Criticisms of the AU's Approach to Somalia

The AU's approach to Somalia has been criticized by some observers. One criticism is that the mission has relied too heavily on military force to address the country's problems. Critics argue that the AU has not done enough to address the root causes of the conflict, including poverty, political corruption, and the marginalization of minority groups (Paul D. Williams, 2017).

Another criticism of the AU's approach to Somalia is that it has not done enough to promote political dialogue and reconciliation. Critics argue that the mission has focused too much on military operations and has not given enough attention to political and social issues. Additionally, the AU has been criticized for failing to provide adequate resources to AMISOM, which has limited its ability to achieve its objectives fully (Paul D. Williams, 2017).

In conclusion, the AU's engagement in Somalia has had a significant impact on the country's security. AMISOM has been successful in pushing Al-Shabaab out of major urban centers and providing security for key institutions. However, the mission has faced challenges, including inadequate resources and poor coordination among troop-contributing countries. Additionally, the AU's approach to Somalia has been criticized for relying too heavily on military force and not addressing the root causes of the conflict. Overall, the AU's engagement in Somalia remains critical to promoting peace and stability in the region.

IGAD's Role in Somalia

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a regional organization comprising eight countries in the Horn of Africa. Its primary objective is to promote regional cooperation and economic integration among its member states. Since its establishment in 1986, IGAD has played a crucial role in

Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. This paper will explore the founding and purpose of IGAD, its involvement in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes, and the challenges and limitations of IGAD's efforts in Somalia.

Founding and Purpose of IGAD

IGAD was established in 1986 by six countries in the Horn of Africa, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda. Its primary objective was to promote regional cooperation and economic integration among its member states. IGAD's mandate has since expanded to include promoting peace, security, and stability in the region.

IGAD's Involvement in Somalia's Peace and Reconciliation Processes

IGAD has been involved in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes since the early 1990s. In 1992, IGAD established the Regional Initiative for Peace in Somalia (RIPIS) to help bring an end to the civil war and promote national reconciliation. RIPIS facilitated the Arta Peace Conference in 2000, which led to the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG).

In 2004, IGAD established the Somalia Peace and Reconciliation Process (SPRP) to address the political and security challenges facing the country. SPRP facilitated the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004, which was later replaced by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2012. IGAD has continued to play a crucial role in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes, including facilitating the 2016 elections, which led to the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed.

Challenges and Limitations of IGAD's Efforts in Somalia

IGAD's efforts in Somalia have faced several challenges and limitations. One challenge is the lack of unity among member states. IGAD member states have different political and security interests, which have sometimes hindered the organization's ability to act collectively in addressing Somalia's challenges. Additionally, IGAD's peace and reconciliation processes have often been criticized for lacking inclusivity and failing to engage with key stakeholders, including women, youth, and civil society.

Another limitation of IGAD's efforts in Somalia is the lack of adequate resources. The organization has been heavily reliant on external donors to fund its peace and reconciliation processes in Somalia. This reliance on external funding has limited IGAD's ability to fully implement its programs and achieve its objectives.

In conclusion, IGAD has played a crucial role in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. The organization has facilitated several peace conferences that have led to the establishment of transitional and federal governments in Somalia. However, IGAD's efforts in Somalia have faced several challenges and limitations, including the lack of unity among member states, lack of inclusivity in its peace and reconciliation processes, and inadequate resources. Nonetheless, IGAD remains a critical regional actor in promoting peace, security, and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Other Regional Organizations' Impact on Somalia

While the African Union and IGAD have played significant roles in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes, other regional organizations have also had an impact on the country. This paper will explore the role of the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and other regional organizations in Somalia, as well as economic and diplomatic ties between Somalia and other African countries.

Role of the Arab League, OIC, and Other Regional Organizations

The Arab League and the OIC have been involved in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. The Arab League has provided financial and humanitarian assistance to Somalia and facilitated talks between different factions. In 1993, the Arab League brokered the first ceasefire agreement between the warring parties in Somalia.

The OIC has also been involved in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. In 1995, the OIC established the Contact Group on Somalia, which included Egypt, Iran, Italy, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The Contact Group was tasked with facilitating national reconciliation and supporting humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

Other regional organizations have also been involved in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. For example, the European Union (EU) has provided financial and technical assistance to Somalia's federal and state institutions. The EU has also supported the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has helped to stabilize the country's security situation.

Economic and Diplomatic Ties between Somalia and Other African Countries

Somalia has strong economic and diplomatic ties with other African countries. Somalia is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). These organizations promote regional economic integration and facilitate trade between member states.

In addition to its regional economic ties, Somalia has diplomatic ties with other African countries. Somalia has embassies in several African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. These embassies facilitate diplomatic relations and promote economic and cultural exchanges between Somalia and other African countries.

In conclusion, the Arab League, OIC, and other regional organizations have played a role in Somalia's peace and reconciliation processes. These organizations have provided financial and humanitarian assistance to Somalia and facilitated talks between different factions. Somalia also has strong economic and diplomatic ties with other African countries, which promote regional economic integration and facilitate trade and diplomatic relations. Despite the challenges facing Somalia, the country's engagement with regional organizations and other African countries provides opportunities for growth and development.

Assessing the Impact of Regional Organizations on Somalia's Foreign Policy and National Interests

Regional organizations have played a significant role in shaping Somalia's foreign policy and national

interests. This paper will assess the benefits and drawbacks of Somalia's engagement with regional organizations, how they have influenced Somalia's foreign policy priorities, and the implications of Somalia's foreign relations for its economic development, security, and governance.

Benefits and Drawbacks of Somalia's Engagement with Regional Organizations

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has brought several benefits. For example, the country has received financial and humanitarian assistance from these organizations. Regional organizations have also provided a platform for Somalia to engage in diplomacy and promote its interests in the international community.

However, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has also had drawbacks. Some regional organizations have pursued their interests in Somalia at the expense of the country's national interests. Moreover, some regional organizations have been criticized for their lack of coordination, which has resulted in overlapping and conflicting initiatives.

Influence of Regional Organizations on Somalia's Foreign Policy Priorities

Regional organizations have influenced Somalia's foreign policy priorities by shaping the country's strategic interests and goals. For example, Somalia's engagement with the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has prioritized peace and security, governance, and economic development.

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has also influenced its foreign policy decisions. For example, the country's membership in regional organizations has influenced its foreign policy alignment, as Somalia often supports the positions of these organizations on regional and international issues.

Implications of Somalia's Foreign Relations for Economic Development, Security, and Governance

Somalia's foreign relations have significant implications for the country's economic development, security, and governance. For example, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has contributed to economic development by facilitating trade and investment between Somalia and other countries in the region.

Moreover, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has contributed to security by enhancing the country's capacity to respond to security threats. For example, the AU and IGAD have supported the deployment of peacekeeping forces in Somalia, which have helped to stabilize the country's security situation.

Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has also contributed to governance by promoting democratic values and human rights. Regional organizations have provided technical assistance and capacity building to Somalia's institutions, which has helped to strengthen governance and promote the rule of law.

In conclusion, regional organizations have had a significant impact on Somalia's foreign policy and national interests. While there are benefits to Somalia's engagement with regional organizations, there

are also drawbacks, such as the pursuit of interests at the expense of Somalia's national interests. Regional organizations have also influenced Somalia's foreign policy priorities, and have significant implications for the country's economic development, security, and governance.

Conclusion

This paper has assessed the role of regional organizations in Somalia, including the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Arab League, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It has analyzed the history and evolution of their engagement in Somalia, their peacekeeping missions, criticisms of their approach, economic and diplomatic ties between Somalia and other African countries, and their impact on Somalia's foreign policy and national interests. Based on these findings, this conclusion provides key takeaways and implications for Somalia's future engagement with regional organizations and recommendations for strengthening Somalia's relations with regional partners.

Key Takeaways and Implications for Somalia's Future Engagement with Regional Organizations

Firstly, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has had both benefits and drawbacks. While Somalia has received financial and humanitarian assistance and a platform for diplomacy, some regional organizations have pursued their interests at the expense of Somalia's national interests. Therefore, Somalia must carefully consider its engagement with regional organizations and ensure that its national interests are not compromised.

Secondly, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has prioritized peace and security, governance, and economic development. These priorities should continue to guide Somalia's engagement with regional organizations.

Thirdly, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has significant implications for its economic development, security, and governance. Somalia should continue to strengthen its relations with regional partners to promote economic growth, enhance security, and promote democratic values and human rights.

Recommendations for Strengthening Somalia's Relations with Regional Partners

To strengthen Somalia's relations with regional partners, several recommendations can be made. Firstly, Somalia should continue to engage in diplomacy with regional organizations to promote its national interests. Secondly, Somalia should ensure that its engagement with regional organizations aligns with its strategic priorities of peace and security, governance, and economic development. Thirdly, Somalia should promote regional coordination and cooperation to avoid overlapping and conflicting initiatives. Fourthly, Somalia should continue to receive technical assistance and capacity building from regional organizations to strengthen its institutions and promote the rule of law.

Furthermore, Somalia should take measures to address the criticisms of regional organizations' approach to Somalia. This can be done by advocating for regional organizations to prioritize Somalia's national interests and engaging in dialogue to address conflicting interests.

In conclusion, Somalia's engagement with regional organizations has been complex and

multidimensional. While there are challenges, Somalia should continue to engage with regional partners to promote economic growth, enhance security, and promote democratic values and human rights. By doing so, Somalia can strengthen its relations with regional partners and promote its national interests.

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