

---

# Islamist State Formation in Somalia

---

## **Mir-Ali Askerov**

*Centre for Stability and Risk Analysis, HSE University, Russia*

## **Leonid Issaev**

*HSE University in St. Petersburg; Centre for Stability and Risk Analysis, HSE University; Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia*

## **Andrey Korotayev**

*Centre for Stability and Risk Analysis, HSE University; Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article examines the trajectory of jihadist state-building in Somalia from the early 1990s to the present, focusing on the evolution of Islamist governance projects initiated by Al-Ittihad al-Islami\*, the Union of Islamic Courts\*, Al-Shabaab\*, and the Islamic State's Somali affiliate (Wilayat al-Somal\*). Drawing on field research conducted in Somalia in May 2023, expert interviews, as well as reports from research centers, government institutions, and propaganda materials from jihadist organizations, the study employs qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis to explore both narratives and governance practices. The analysis demonstrates that Al-Shabaab has developed the most durable proto-state structure in Somalia, successfully institutionalizing judicial mechanisms, taxation, and basic service provision while embedding itself into local clan dynamics. In con-*

Recommended citation: Askerov M.-A., Issaev L., Korotayev A. Islamist State Formation in Somalia. *Social Evolution & History*, Vol. 24 No. 2, September 2025, pp. 77–102. DOI: 10.30884/seh/2025.02.04.

© 2025 'Uchitel' Publishing House

*trast, Wilayat al-Sumal remains limited in scope, focusing on insurgency and terrorist attacks without establishing meaningful governance or territorial control, and functioning instead as a logistical and financial hub within the broader Islamic State network in Africa. The article argues that the Somali case illustrates the divergent approaches of al-Qaeda\* and the Islamic State towards state-building; whereas Al-Shabaab's relative success stems from its ability to localize and integrate into Somali social structures, Wilayat Somalia's failure underscores the limits of a transnational jihadist model detached from local realities. This comparison not only enhances our understanding of Islamist governance in Somalia but also sheds light on the broader dynamics of jihadist competition across Africa.*

**Keywords:** *Somalia, state-building, the Islamic State\*, Al-Shabaab\*, Wilayat al-Sumal\*, al-Qaeda\*, jihadist.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Africa has undeniably emerged as one of the global epicenters of jihadist expansion (*e.g.*, Grinin 2020; Issaev *et al.* 2020, 2021, 2022; Bacon, Warner 2021; Raineri 2022; Besenyő, Sólyomfi 2024; Besenyő *et al.* 2024; Korotayev *et al.* 2024). This trend became particularly pronounced following a series of setbacks for jihadist movements in the Arab world. Terrorist organizations have continued to exploit local socio-economic, ethnic, and political instability to consolidate their power. Against this backdrop, two regions stand out most prominently – the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. In both areas, jihadist activity has persisted for decades and has long since evolved beyond guerrilla warfare into attempts at state-building, with varying degrees of success.

Somalia was the first African country where jihadists declared the creation of their own state. The collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s led to widespread disillusionment with secular models of governance. Out of this environment, the group *Al-Ittihad al-Islami*<sup>1</sup> emerged and, in 1992, proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Somalia, with Bosaso as its center (this entity, however, turned out to be rather short-lived) (Sheikh 2019). This precedent was later emulated by Islamists in Azawad, who in 2013 overthrew the rule of the Tuareg nationalists in the newly established Tuareg state

and tried to replace it with Islamist statehood (*e.g.*, Korotayev and Khokhlova 2022). Comparable cases include Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant,<sup>2</sup> and the Taliban in Afghanistan – all of which pursued distinct strategies for state-building. What sets *Al-Ittihad al-Islami* apart, however, is that it sought to construct an Islamic polity almost entirely from scratch, without continuity from pre-existing government structures.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the rise of Somali Islamists and the measures they undertook in the process of state-building and the establishment of their own emirate. It also examines the extent to which these efforts proved successful. Particular attention is paid to the approaches adopted by different armed Islamist groups in Somalia, as well as to the unique features that distinguish the Somali jihadist experience from others across Africa and beyond.

Accordingly, the article is structured as follows. It begins by exploring the roots of Islamism in Somalia, the characteristics of Somali society, and the role of clans/tribes in Islamic state-building. It then turns to the case of the Union of Islamic Courts and considers how the experiences of the 2000s have shaped contemporary Islamist projects in the country. Finally, the article assesses the experience of the Islamic State in Somalia, which diverged from earlier groups by abandoning ambitions for state-building entirely.

This article draws on data from news agencies, reports from research centers and governmental organizations, as well as findings from fieldwork conducted in Somalia in May 2023 and a series of expert interviews. These sources made it possible to assess the perspectives of both the expert community and government officials on the processes under study. In addition, propaganda materials produced by *Al-Shabaab* and the Islamic State were analyzed. The research employed qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis. This approach made it possible, on the one hand, to identify the key narratives disseminated by these organizations and, on the other, to examine discourse across three levels: linguistic practices, discursive practices, and the socio-cultural practices resulting from the application of these discourses.

### 1.1. Traditional Socio-Political Organization of the Somalis and Emergence of the Somali State

The history of modern Somali statehood began in 1960 when the former Italian and British colonies in the Horn of Africa gained independence and united to form a single state. Despite early efforts to establish a democratic national government during the first decade (1960–1969), clan-based rivalries soon dominated the political arena (Korotayev and Voronina 2024). As Aleynikov notes, the political parties that emerged during this period largely represented the interests of specific clans, while ideology was not a decisive factor in their competition (Aleynikov 2012: 21).

The terminology used to describe Somalia's socio-political structure is itself problematic. To start with, an important feature of the social structure in Somalia is the presence of ethno-political formations, which in modern English-language publications are most often referred to as ‘clans’ (Lewis 1961, 1988, 2008; Zoppi 2018; Yuusuf 2021; Osman and Abebe 2023). At the same time, it is quite obvious to social anthropologists dealing with the traditional socio-political organization of the population in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that we are talking specifically about those forms of socio-political organization that in this macro region are usually designated as *qabā'il* (singular *qabīlah*), almost universally translated into English as ‘tribes’ (Eickelman 2001: 65–119; Korotayev 2003, 2020, 2021). To designate these entities, the Somalis use the word *qabiil*, which goes back precisely to the above-mentioned Arabic term *qabīlah*.

Note that in political anthropology, the ‘tribe’ can be considered as a form of both political and ethnic organization. The famous British social anthropologist, Bronisław Malinowski proposed to distinguish between ‘tribe-state’ (tribe as a form of political organization) and ‘tribe-nation’ (tribe as an ethnic or subethnic entity) (Malinowski 2015; Korotayev 1996). The Somali *qabiil* has both meanings and resembles both the Arabic usage of the term *qabīlah* (as primarily a form of socio-political organization) and the Swahili usage of the term *kabila* to designate an ethnic entity (in Swahili, *e.g.*, the word *kabila* can denote such large ethnic groups as the Maasai, Makonde or Iraqw). This is, apparently, no coincidence, since the Somalis have

experienced both a powerful Arabic influence and the influence of the Swahili civilization (currently, the number of Somalis whose native language is Swahili is even slightly higher than the number of those whose native language is Arabic) (Menkhaus 2003).

In general, when we talk about Somali clans, we are referring to that kind of socio-political structures, which in the space from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east, from Kurdistan in the north to Yemen and in the south, are usually called ‘tribes’ (*qabā’il*) (Gellner 1971; Korotayev 2020; Tapper 2011); on the other hand, ‘clan’ structures of the highest level (so called ‘clan families’) are rather subethnic (Isaaq, Darod, Hawiye) or even ethnic (Rahanweyn) entities (and in this regard they more closely correlate with the Swahili *kabila*). However, since the term ‘clan’ has been established to describe the traditional socio-political structures of the Somalis (Lewis 2008; Zoppi 2018), we will primarily use it in what follows.

According to the famous British anthropologist, Ioan M. Lewis (1961), the upper level of the traditional Somali ‘clan’ organization is constituted by so-called ‘clan families,’ which in the MENA region would rather correspond to tribal confederations (they may be also called ‘superclans’). ‘Clan families’ consist of ‘clans’ (which in the MENA region would rather correspond to federations of tribes), whereas ‘clans’ consist of ‘sub-clans’ (which in the MENA region would rather correspond to individual tribes) that control specific territories (Farah and Lewis 1997: 352; Abbink 2009b).

It is generally believed that there are four main clan families in present-day Somalia: the Hawiye, the Dir (including the Isaaq), the Darod and the Rahanweyn (the Digil-and-Mirifle) (*e.g.*, Aleynikov 2014: 27), although the Isaaq tend to consider themselves as a separate clan family of the same level as the Darod or the Hawiye (*e.g.*, Konovalov 2010; Ahmed 1995).

The core of the Dir, Isaaq, Darod, and Hawiye clans relied mostly on nomadic pastoralism (especially, camel-breeding), whereas the Rahanweyn clans mostly practiced agriculture combined with animal husbandry, and, thus, their status has traditionally been significantly lower than that of the ‘camel-breeding’ clans (Ambroso 2002; Konovalov 2010).

Most Rahanwein communicate with each other in a language different from that used by the other major ('pastoralist') clan families. We are talking about the Af-Maay language, also known as Af-Maymay, Mai-Mai or simply Mai/Maay (Paster 2006). Previously, Af-Maay was often classified as a Somali dialect, but more recent research by linguist Mohamed Diri Abdullahi suggests that it is a distinct Afro-Asiatic language of the Cushitic branch, albeit very closely related to North Somalian (the official language of the Federal Republic of Somalia) (Abdullahi 2001: 9). At the same time, many Digil tribes ('clans') that are part of the Rahanwein confederation speak their own languages (Af-Tunni, Af-Garre, Af-Bun, Dabarre) of the so-called Digil subgroup (Eberhard *et al.* 2022). Thus, the Rahanwein should be more reasonably considered not a subethnic, but an ethnic group, or even a set of ethnic groups included in the Somali super-ethnos (Korotayev and Voronina 2024; Korotayev and Khayrullin 2024).

Across all levels of the clan-tribal hierarchy – from the smallest unit, the *rer* (extended family), to the highest level encompassing an entire tribal confederation ('superclan') – governance is supposed to be exercised through councils in which the interests of different social groups are represented by elders and other respected figures. Each confederation is headed by a chief supported by a council of clan representatives. The chief resolves internal disputes by consensus and represents the clan in inter-clan affairs; he also interprets both customary and Islamic (sharia) law in new contexts. However, the chief cannot act independently and does not serve as an absolute military leader, since matters of war are usually situational (Lewis 1994: 97).

In the post-independence Somali state, political power was dominated by members of the Darod confederation, which provoked resentment among other groups. The 1969 military coup brought to power a junta led by Mohamed Siad Barre, who undertook an attempt at a revolutionary transformation of the Somali society along the lines of 'scientific socialism'.<sup>3</sup> However, despite its rhetoric of building an egalitarian socialist society and combating tribalism, the regime not only failed to address these problems but reinforced the dominance of the Darod superclan, to which the 1969 revolution leaders themselves belonged (Hassan 2021: 1902). The suppression of political activity

and neglect of other clans' interests inevitably laid the foundations for future internal conflict. These tensions deepened further with the outbreak of war between Somalia and Ethiopia.

By 1981, widespread repression and mass killings of Isaaq clan members had prompted the formation of the opposition Somali National Movement, which launched a guerrilla struggle against the Somali state forces (Marchal 2007: 1102). In 1988, Siad Barre's decision to abandon Somalia's territorial claims to Ethiopia's Ogaden region – home primarily to the Ogaden clan of the Darod superclan – cost him the loyalty of significant Darod elites, who went on to establish the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ahmad 2015: 90). In 1989, the Hawiye clans also entered the armed struggle, forming the United Somali Congress. Later, several clans coalesced into the Somali National Alliance under the leadership of former General Mohamed Farah Hassan Aideed. However, clan rivalries also penetrated the opposition, fueling further fragmentation and factional conflict (Aleynikov 2012: 23).

Thus, in 1991, after the overthrow of the Siad Barre regime and the victory of the Somali revolution, Somalia entered an era of civil war (*e.g.*, Korotayev and Voronina 2024) that continues to this day and in which clan and tribal dynamics play a decisive role. However, as Aleynikov observes, the active phase of the civil war concentrated primarily in the southern and central regions of the country, formerly under Italian control. The northern provinces, where the self-declared independent state of Somaliland and the State of Puntland (now a constituent part of the Somali Federation) have been established, are marked by relative security and stability. This can be explained in large part by their clan homogeneity: in Somaliland, the population is predominantly Isaaq, while in Puntland it largely belongs to the Harti branch of the Darod clan-tribal confederation/superclan (Aleynikov 2012: 33).

Religion also deserves special mention, as Sufi orders (*tariqas*) have traditionally played an important role in Somali society. Among the most influential are the Qadiriyya, Ahmadiyya, Salihyya, and Rifaiyya. Historically, Sufi *tariqas* were active in anti-colonial uprisings, the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, and charitable work. Their *jamaats* are respected among Somali clans and remain actively involved in social life, engaging in economic activities, helping the

poor, and organizing pilgrimages to Mecca (Aleynikov 2012: 145). Since the 1990s, however, various Salafi associations have also expanded their presence in the country. These groups seek to fulfill a similar role in Somali society and actively compete with Sufi *tariqas* for the allegiance of clan leaders and elders (Brazhalovich, Klyuchnikov, and Lukyanov 2016: 185).

## **1.2. Development of the Somali Crisis and the Islamic Courts Union**

Following the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in January 1991, the political movement known as the United Somali Congress (USC) attempted to establish a transitional government. However, some of the USC's allied groups refused to support this initiative, as the Congress was seen as representing primarily the interests of the Hawiye superclan. Soon after, fighting broke out in Mogadishu between the USC and the Somali Patriotic Movement, which represented the Ogaden and Harti clans (both are branches of the Darod superclan), as well as the Somali Democratic Alliance, led by the northern Gadabursi clan (of the Dir superclan) (Issa-Salwe 1996: 104).

The deteriorating humanitarian situation and the effective collapse of the Somali statehood prompted UN intervention under the UNITAF and UNOSOM I missions. Their mandate was to reconcile warring clans and negotiate arrangements for shared use of vital resources. Despite some successes – for example, in mediating between the Abgal and Habar Gidir clans (of the Hawiye superclan) – the UN missions failed to achieve lasting stability. Certain groups, particularly the Somali National Alliance, perceived UN forces as a threat to their dominance and openly engaged in armed confrontations with the international peacekeepers (*e.g.*, Drysdale 1994: 168).

In 2000, the Transitional National Government (TNG) was established in Djibouti with the aim of uniting several rival clans. Yet this institution soon faced competition from the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council, headed by Hussein Farrah Aideed, former leader of the Somali National Alliance and a member of the Habar Gidir clan of the Hawiye confederation. The TNG was eventually forced to concede to the *de facto* autonomy of clans and sub-clans that, by that

point, had established their own political structures (Sumie 2003: 464; Korotayev and Khayrullin 2024; see also, *e.g.*, Le Sage 2002).

In 2004, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was created in Nairobi, temporarily resolving the conflict between the TNG and the Reconciliation Council by integrating the leaders of the latter into the new federal framework. However, this structure – despite possessing the formal institutions of government and an army – wielded no real authority, due to its lack of effective territorial control, financial resources, technical support, and capacity to collect taxes to provide even basic social services to the population (*e.g.*, Korotayev, Voronina 2024). By 2006, an alternative political force – the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) – began to gain influence. By July of that year, the ICU had succeeded in capturing Mogadishu and temporarily extended its control over most of Somalia.

## **2. THE ISLAMIC COURTS UNION**

The origins of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) date back to the early years of the Somali civil war, when the collapse of the state and the resulting lawlessness prompted local religious leaders in northern Mogadishu to establish the first sharia courts (Massoud 2021: 76). These courts primarily dealt with family disputes and petty crime, and quickly earned the trust of the population because their leaders did not take sides in clan or factional rivalries (Massoud 2021: 81). Although the courts were known for the severity of their punishments and lacked a formal organizational structure, they managed to bring a degree of stability and effectively addressed administrative issues in the areas under their control (Kaplan 2006).

The consolidation of sharia judges into the Islamic Courts Union occurred in April 1999, with the aim of driving warlords from the outskirts of Mogadishu. By June–July 2006, the ICU had succeeded in defeating the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, an umbrella group of warlords, becoming the first faction since the outbreak of civil war to establish full control over the Somali capital. During its short rule from June to December 2006, the ICU managed to reconstruct state institutions, attract investors, and facilitate the return of refugees by issuing visas; it also restored citizens' rights to property that had been confiscated during the conflict (Ali

Ismail 2010: 372). Top UN officials referred to the brief period of the ICU rule in Central and Southern Somalia as a ‘golden era’ in the recent history of Somalia (Okure 2007). During our own fieldwork in Somalia, conducted in May 2023, we could see with our own eyes that the only banknotes circulating in the country were still those issued by the ICU government during their rather short period of control over the country.

One of the ICU's central policy agendas was the fight against tribalism. Public rhetoric against tribalism was not new in Somali politics, having already been characteristic of Siad Barre's government. What distinguished the ICU, however, were specific measures it adopted, such as encouraging marriages between members of marginalized and privileged clans as a means of weakening entrenched divisions (Elmi 2010: 193). Yet the ICU's leadership had long relied on the financial backing of Hawiye businessmen, and most of its leaders were themselves from the Hawiye clan. Enforcement of court rulings also depended on militias drawn from local clans (Skjelderup, Ainashe, and Abdulle 2020: 560). Thus, while the ICU achieved a degree of egalitarianism in its judicial system – with rulings issued regardless of clan affiliation – the organization itself was marked by clear Hawiye dominance.

Ideologically, the ICU did not initially emerge as an Islamist movement but rather as a pragmatic response to the need for restoring law and order. Early courts had little explicitly Islamist agenda, and they were often headed not by trained scholars of Islamic law but by local clan elders. Moreover, the ICU did not adhere to any single school of Islamic jurisprudence or theological orientation (Abdullahi 2021: 9).

Over time, however, as the courts evolved into a more unified organization, they remained far from homogeneous. According to Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, the ICU brought together adherents of both moderate and radical strands of political Islam (on the difference between moderate and radical Islamism/political Islam see, *e.g.*, Grinin *et al.* 2019). This produced deep internal divisions between the moderate wing, represented by the cabinet of ministers under Sheikh Sharif, and the radical or ‘Salafi’ wing, represented by the legislative council led by Sheikh Aweys. The ICU's vanguard faction, *Al-Sha-*

*baab* – at that time still not fully independent – pursued an especially radical agenda. Its rigidly conservative policies alienated many Somalis and fueled internal disputes within the ICU. Moreover, despite the ICU's declared struggle against tribalism, Al-Shabaab militias often supported the Hawiye clans in clashes with the Darod, at times openly disregarding ICU rulings when these favored the latter (Barnes and Hassan 2007: 157). Despite these tensions, Al-Shabaab played a decisive role in the ICU's military successes, which prevented even the moderate leadership from expelling its radical elements.

The growing influence of Al-Shabaab alarmed the international community. The ICU's territorial expansion – most notably its advance into the Kismayo region – also provoked concern from the Transitional National Government and from Ethiopia, both of which became targets of the ICU's increasingly hostile propaganda. During this period, the ICU frequently invoked the idea of 'Greater Somalia,' a project dating back to Siad Barre's rule and one of the underlying causes of the war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region. The vision of 'Greater Somalia' sought to unite all territories inhabited predominantly by ethnic Somalis: present-day Somalia, Djibouti, parts of Ethiopia, and provinces of Kenya (Zoppi 2015: 51).

Ethiopia viewed the ICU's consolidation of power and the return of irredentist ideas with alarm, particularly as they recalled earlier Somali territorial ambitions that had led to war. In response, the Ethiopian government launched a campaign to discredit the ICU, portraying it as a radical Islamist threat – a highly effective narrative in the early 2000s. Ultimately, this campaign laid the groundwork for support of (or at least acquiescence to) Ethiopia's military intervention. In December 2006, an international coalition backed by Ethiopia and the United States launched a military offensive against the ICU government with the aim of overthrowing it and installing the Transitional Federal Government control over Somalia. The Islamists declared a jihad against Ethiopia. Despite initial resistance, the ICU government was defeated and forced to leave the capital (Bamfo 2010; Hansen 2013: 50; Khayre 2014: 208; Warner and Weiss 2017; Alekseyev 2020; Shirkey 2022: 24).

### 3. THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AL-SHABAAB AS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION

Al-Shabaab is one of the largest and most notorious terrorist organizations not only in Africa but globally. Its full name, *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen*, translates as the ‘Movement of the Youth Practicing Jihad.’ The group’s self-proclaimed goal is to wage war against foreign powers and their local allies within the territory of ‘Greater Somalia,’ as well as to establish Islamic rule across these lands. Rejecting the legitimacy of modern national borders, Al-Shabaab extends its operations beyond Somalia into Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Furthermore, it actively draws upon the same ‘Greater Somalia’ project described earlier (Bacon and Muibu 2019: 282).

The roots of Al-Shabaab are closely tied to both the history of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the earlier organization *Al-Ittihad Al-Islami* (AIAI), one of the most prominent Salafi political groups of the 1990s. AIAI maintained ties with Osama bin Laden and pursued an active militarization strategy. In the early 2000s, AIAI split: the more moderate faction continued to align itself with clan-based militias, while its radical wing joined the ICU. This wing quickly distinguished itself by adopting more uncompromising positions on both political and religious issues. Politically, former AIAI members strongly opposed any cooperation with international organizations, particularly the United Nations, and rejected the idea that the ICU required international recognition (Shinn 2004: 40). Religiously, they clashed with proponents of Somali Sufi Islam and the region’s longstanding synthesis of Shafi‘i jurisprudence, Ash‘ari theology, and Sufi practice (Shinn 2004: 43).

As has been already mentioned above, in late 2006, an international intervention began when Ethiopian forces, supported by the United States, entered Somalia alongside the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). By February 2007, African Union peacekeepers (AMISOM), authorized by the UN Security Council, also joined the campaign. The coalition dealt a series of decisive defeats, forcing the Islamists to withdraw from key urban centers. However, in October 2008, the TFG signed a power-sharing agreement with moderate former ICU members, paving the way for the inclusion of moderate Is-

lamists in the government (Abbink 2009a: 105; Kasajja 2013; Demeke 2014: 251–252; Robinson 2016).

This arrangement elevated Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, the leader of the ICU's moderate wing, to the presidency. Yet the agreement lacked broad legitimacy, particularly among Islamists, and triggered another major split. Many ICU leaders firmly rejected any compromise with the TFG. At the forefront of this opposition stood Al-Shabaab, which subsequently consolidated all hardline elements under its leadership and transformed from a faction into a fully independent organization led by Ahmed Abdi Godane (also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair). Since this split was primarily ideological, Al-Shabaab absorbed the most radical actors on Somalia's Islamist political scene (Omenma, Hendricks, and Ajaebili 2020: 2). As Rob Wise of the Center for Strategic and International Studies argues, the Ethiopian intervention, though framed as counterterrorism, ultimately played a decisive role in transforming Al-Shabaab from a small and relatively marginal wing of a broader Islamist movement into the Horn of Africa's most powerful and radical militant group (Wise 2011: 4).

From its inception, Al-Shabaab maintained close ties with al-Qaeda<sup>4</sup>, as many of its founding members were veterans of AIAI who had trained in al-Qaeda camps. In 2012, Al-Shabaab's leadership formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, making it the Somali branch of the global jihadist movement. This step served a dual purpose: attracting more international volunteers and securing increased support – including financial assistance – from transnational jihadist networks and sympathizers. Importantly, the pledge did not entail the subordination of Al-Shabaab's leadership within Somalia to al-Qaeda's global command (Joseph and Maruf 2018: 216). In 2014, the group's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was killed in a U.S. drone strike. He was succeeded by Ahmed Umar (also known as Abu Ubaidah), who continues to lead the organization.

In terms of religious ideology, while Al-Shabaab has remained firmly Salafi-jihadist, certain shifts toward relative moderation within the Somali Islamic context can be observed. Interviews with experts suggest that the group's most aggressive campaigns against local Sufi practices peaked between 2008 and 2010. Since then, Al-Shabaab has gradually scaled back such activities, including attacks on Sufi shrines

and graves. Critical discourse analysis confirms this trend. For instance, the graduation ceremony of Al-Shabaab's 'Brigade of Seekers of Martyrdom' (*Katibat al-Istishhadiyin*) was held at a training camp named after Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan – a Sufi leader of the early twentieth century known for his anti-colonial struggle, whom the British derisively labeled the 'Mad Mullah.' Previously, Al-Shabaab refrained from invoking his legacy due to his strong Sufi associations. Yet at this ceremony, the group's spokesperson Ali Mahmoud Rage praised Hassan extensively, portraying Al-Shabaab as his successor. The ceremony was broadcast by Al-Kataib Media Foundation, the group's propaganda outlet. Another illustrative case is the fatwa of Abu Salman Hassan Hussein al-Somali, a scholar linked to Al-Shabaab, who advised studying jurisprudence through traditional madhhabs, particularly the Shafi'i school dominant in Somalia, and rejected the 'non-madhab approach' promoted by some Salafi scholars. This represents a significant shift, given that disputes over madhab adherence had previously been a major fault line between Salafis and the wider Somali Muslim community.

Al-Shabaab's territorial control has fluctuated over time. The group maintains a persistent presence across parts of central and southern Somalia, though it has lost its earlier footholds in the north, where some militants defected to the Islamic State (*e.g.*, Korotayev and Voronina 2024). The town of Jilib, in the Middle Juba region of southern Somalia, currently serves as the group's de facto capital.

#### **4. AL-SHABAAB AND STATE-BUILDING**

The idea of establishing an Islamist state in Somalia can be traced back at least to the early 1990s, when *Al-Itihaad al-Islami* first became active. Following the collapse of Siad Barre's regime, some of its members were able to form militias by exploiting clan warfare in Puntland. These forces even seized the strategic port city of Bosaso, turning it into a major training hub and later a command center. They subsequently captured Garowe, 750 kilometers to the south, and declared the creation of the 'Islamic Emirate of Somalia in Bosaso' (Sheikh 2019: 58). However, this experiment was short-lived: the militants quickly lost control of the towns and were decisively defeated, leaving little evidence of how the emirate functioned. Nevertheless,

the attempt demonstrates that the idea of an Islamic emirate in Somalia had already been articulated and briefly realized. By contrast, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) never described its territories as an emirate, underscoring its relative distance from jihadist state-building discourses.

Since 2011, Al-Shabaab has referred to its territories as the ‘Islamic Emirate of Somalia.’ While no formal declaration has been found, it appears that the group gradually began to present itself as a stable political entity founded on Islamic principles (Rudincová 2011: 44). In many respects, this self-perception aligns with reality: in certain areas, Al-Shabaab administers institutions more effectively than any other Somali faction.

As emphasized earlier, clan/tribe and lineage remain central to Somali society and politics. Tribal rivalries were a principal cause of the civil war, and thus Al-Shabaab's approach to clan politics warrants particular attention.

Even during its time as part of the ICU, Al-Shabaab was criticized by clan elders for bias in conflicts between the Darod and Hawiye. While the ICU as a whole relied heavily on Hawiye support, Al-Shabaab's partiality was especially visible. Once it became an independent organization, however, the group sought to distance itself from clan politics and embraced a discourse of egalitarianism, branding itself as an ‘Islamic movement for all Somali Muslims, regardless of lineage’ (Solomon 2014: 360). Notably, leadership appointments reflect this attempt: while its first leader, Aden Hashi Ayro (2006–2008), was Hawiye, his successor Ahmed Abdi Godane (2008–2014), who oversaw the transition to the ‘Islamic Emirate’ discourse, came from the Isaaq clan, and the current leader, Abu Ubaidah (2014–present), is from the Dir (Solomon 2014: 360).

Despite such gestures, Al-Shabaab's internal structures remain far from clan-neutral. Leadership positions are still concentrated among a limited number of clans, with Hawiye dominance particularly marked. For instance, the *Amniyat* (secret intelligence service)<sup>5</sup> conducts fewer operations in Hawiye areas than elsewhere and is itself controlled largely by Hawiye members. A 2018 Hiraal Institute report found that of *Amniyat* officials, 50 % were Hawiye, 22 % Darod, 18 % Rahanweyn, and 4 % Dir. The military command reflected similar patterns:

57 % Hawiye, 15 % Darod, 13 % Rahanweyn, 13 % Dir, and 2 % others (Mubarak 2018).

Yet at the administrative level, Al-Shabaab is more inclusive. Its governance structure incorporates members from nearly all Somali clans, including diaspora communities in eastern Ethiopia and north-eastern Kenya. This inclusivity helps sustain the group's 'pan-Somali' image. In 2018, the overall composition of Al-Shabaab officials was reported as 43 % Hawiye, 31 % Darod, 12 % Rahanweyn, 11 % Dir, and 3 % others (Mubarak 2018).

The picture is thus mixed. On the one hand, Al-Shabaab has successfully instrumentalized the clan system to consolidate its authority, and many Somalis view it as a stabilizing force because it manages inter-clan disputes and prevents them from escalating into violence. On the other hand, Hawiye dominance persists, particularly in senior ranks, and this partly explains why the Islamic State in Somalia attracted less defectors from Hawiye backgrounds.

Media analysis further illustrates how Al-Shabaab engages with clan politics. The group regularly publishes reports and videos documenting conferences with clan elders across its territories. These elders publicly voice grievances, pledge loyalty to Abu Ubaidah, and receive recognition. Propaganda materials on military operations highlight not only the names of fighters but also their clan affiliations, with thanks extended to elder networks that supported them. Importantly, such media always showcase members of multiple clans, reinforcing Al-Shabaab's anti-tribalist image. Officially, the group presents itself as the only Somali actor that has transcended tribalism.

Another recurring theme in its media output is the idea of 'Greater Somalia' – the unification of all Somali-inhabited territories divided by colonial borders. Al-Shabaab actively mobilizes this concept, arguing that only Islamic governance can achieve true Somali unity.

In terms of governance, Al-Shabaab distinguishes between urban and rural administration. In urban centers, the group establishes ministries, police forces, courts, prisons, schools, and medical facilities. Its de facto capital, Jilib, illustrates this model. There, hospitals receive approximately USD 2 million annually in group funding, schools (including one for girls) teach both secular and religious subjects, and food distribution centers support the poor (Osman 2022). The pres-

ence of girls' schools teaching English, mathematics, and computer science is striking given the group's jihadist orientation. Al-Shabaab also enforces environmental policies, such as banning non-biodegradable plastic bags (Osman 2022).

Perhaps the clearest attribute of statehood is taxation. Al-Shabaab collects taxes not only across its emirate but also from businesses operating in government-controlled areas. According to interviews conducted by the Hiraal Institute, the group taxes all major Somali companies. Taxes include the annual *zakat* and monthly payments, while additional *infaq* contributions are levied during financial shortages (Mubarak 2020). Al-Shabaab even maintains financial reserves – an unprecedented achievement among Somali factions. By some estimates, in 2014, its monthly revenue from taxation exceeded USD 15 million (Keatinge 2014: 7).

The group also provides arbitration services for business disputes and regulates agricultural exports, such as lemons, by setting quotas through farmers' associations. Taxpayers receive security guarantees, including safe passage at checkpoints and protection in conflict zones.

Expert interviews conducted in Mogadishu and Hargeisa in spring 2023 further emphasize Al-Shabaab's effectiveness as a governing authority. Respondents consistently described its judicial system as efficient and fair – to the extent that residents of government-held areas sometimes travel into Al-Shabaab territory to resolve disputes. They also praised the group's ability to maintain order, noting markedly lower levels of crime, robbery, and corruption compared to other Somali administrations.

In rural areas, Al-Shabaab adopts a more decentralized approach, delegating authority to clan elders. These elders are either co-opted through voluntary pledges of loyalty or appointed after the removal of rivals. Elders receive certain salaries. Their responsibilities include tax collection, overseeing religious schools, and adjudicating minor disputes.

In conclusion, Al-Shabaab's state-building project stands out as one of the most effective not only among African jihadists but within the broader radical Islamist movement. The group has managed to provide governance and social services more efficiently than the Somali federal government in many respects. Its experiment in combat-

ing tribalism is notable, though incomplete, as clan dynamics continue to shape its internal structure. Moreover, tribal tensions have fueled broader divisions within Somalia's jihadist landscape – a subject addressed in the following section.

## 5. THE ISLAMIC STATE'S SOMALIA PROVINCE

Any discussion of Islamists and state-building in Somalia would be incomplete without reference to another group that sought to establish its own project – *Abna' al-Khilafah* ('Sons of the Caliphate'), more widely known as the Islamic State's<sup>6</sup> Somalia Province (IS-SP/ *Wilayat al-Somal*)\*.

The origins of this organization are closely linked to Al-Shabaab's decision in 2012 to dispatch one of its charismatic figures, Abdulqadir Mumin, to Puntland to conduct a recruitment campaign. The aim was to establish a foothold for Al-Qaeda's<sup>7</sup> East African branch in the mountainous areas of northern Somalia and to expand its operational reach. Mumin himself, a native of Puntland from the Majerteen branch of the Darod, represented what was at the time a 'clan minority' within Al-Shabaab. His appointment thus reflected both his personal charisma and his local roots.

By 2014, however, internal divisions and power struggles within Al-Shabaab left Mumin effectively isolated. Although he did not formally break with the leadership, he operated autonomously and without support. At the same time, the Islamic State (IS)<sup>8</sup> was rising to prominence and had declared the caliphate. In October 2015, Mumin responded to its call by pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Webber and Garofalo 2023). Not all of his followers joined him – only around 30 of 300 local Islamist fighters in Puntland defected – resulting in a sharp split within the local faction.

Initially, the Somali IS cell remained inactive. Its first significant operation occurred in October 2016, when it briefly seized the port town of Qandala. This episode is reminiscent of the earlier seizure of Bosaso by *Al-Ittihad al-Islami*. As in that case, IS fighters were unable to hold the city and quickly withdrew. Cells loyal to IS also appeared in Mogadishu and southern Somalia, but they were either eliminated by Al-Shabaab or failed to attract meaningful support. Puntland therefore remained, and still remains, the group's main stronghold, though

IS operatives continue to conduct attacks across southern states of Somalia.

Analysts emphasize that IS's growth in Somalia was linked partly to its more radical stance on tribalism (Warner and Weiss 2017: 29). Whereas Al-Shabaab has been dominated by Hawiye leaders, many non-Hawiye members defected to IS. In Puntland's Bari region, where recruitment has been strongest, IS became increasingly associated with Darod – particularly its Majerteen branch. Its propaganda makes this clear: while Al-Shabaab's media emphasize the marginalization of clans within the federal government, IS highlights the marginalization of clans within Al-Shabaab itself.

Unlike Al-Shabaab, however, IS in Somalia has made no serious attempt at governance. Even during its brief control of Qandala in 2016, there is no evidence that it established administrative structures. Civilians had fled during the fighting, and the group did not attempt to organize local governance. Its current areas of presence, mainly in the sparsely populated mountains of Bari around Bosaso, lack significant civilian populations. Moreover, IS propaganda in Somalia contains no references to taxation, welfare, or sharia-based justice – themes heavily featured in other IS provinces. Instead, its media output is restricted almost entirely to reports of attacks.

In effect, there is virtually no evidence that IS-SP engages in territorial governance. Confronted with limited manpower and lacking secure territorial control, the group has focused on guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Nonetheless, several research reports suggest that IS-SP plays an important logistical and financial role for IS affiliates across Africa. In this sense, Somalia represents a unique case: it is the only African IS province that has made no effort to present itself as a governing entity. This can be explained by two factors: first, the presence of a relatively successful jihadist state-building project already established by Al-Shabaab, and second, IS-SP's lack of resources to compete with it. By contrast, in regions such as the Sahel, IS has engaged in direct competition with Al-Qaeda affiliates that have developed effective governance structures.

## CONCLUSION

The emergence of the Islamic Emirate of Somalia in 1992 marked a strategic shift among radical Islamist groups toward experimenting with proto-state formation in territories under their control. Unlike the Taliban, who assumed power in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s by relying on an existing political infrastructure, *Al-Ittihad al-Islami* – and later Islamic Courts Union and *Al-Shabaab* – sought to build statehood virtually from scratch. The Somali experience of the late twentieth and early twenty first century subsequently served as a reference point, in varying degrees, for Islamist state-building projects in Mali, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq.

Although the state created by *Al-Ittihad al-Islami* proved unsustainable and lasted less than a year, it laid fertile ground for subsequent experiments in Islamic governance. By the late 1990s, the Union of Islamic Courts had emerged, briefly establishing relative stability in Mogadishu and southern Somalia. Judicial institutions, in particular, became the foundation upon which later Islamist state-building projects were constructed, with the experience of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant serving as a prominent parallel.

After 2006, *Al-Shabaab* – the radical offshoot of the Union of Islamic Courts – emerged as the architect of the most durable experiment in jihadist governance in Somalia: the Islamic Emirate of Somalia. Its ability to establish Islamic courts perceived as more just than secular counterparts, to provide limited but functioning systems of education and healthcare, to collect taxes, and to enforce security on controlled territories made it appear more effective than the federal state. Furthermore, its relatively inclusive approach toward marginalized tribes, particularly the Rahanweyn clans, contributed to its durability as a jihadist proto-state.

By contrast, the Somali affiliate of the Islamic State – the so-called *Wilayat al-Sumal* – failed to reproduce this trajectory. Despite pledging allegiance to the Islamic State in 2015 and attempting to position itself as part of a broader caliphate project, it has neither secured stable territorial control nor created meaningful governance institutions. Its activity has remained largely limited to guerrilla warfare and terrorist attacks, with occasional symbolic seizures of towns like Qandala in 2016. Moreover, its propaganda lacks any emphasis on

taxation, service provision, or judicial enforcement – elements that form the core of Islamic State messaging elsewhere. Instead, *Wilayat al-Somal* has functioned primarily as a logistical and financial node within the wider IS network in Africa.

This contrast highlights an important dimension of global jihadist competition: the rivalry between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State is not only military or ideological but also deeply connected to state-building strategies. While *Al-Shabaab*, aligned with al-Qaeda, has managed to institutionalize governance by embedding itself within Somalia's social and clan structures, *Wilayat Somalia* demonstrates the limits of the Islamic State's transnational model when confronted with entrenched local movements. In Somalia, therefore, the struggle between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State has been decided less on the battlefield than in the realm of governance, with *Al-Shabaab* successfully presenting itself as an apparently more legitimate and effective political authority in the eyes of many Somalis.

## FUNDING

The study was carried out within the framework of the HSE University Basic Research Program in 2025 with the support of the Russian Science Foundation (project No. 24-18-00650).

## NOTES

\* This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>1</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>2</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>3</sup> Note that those events can be regarded both as a 'revolution analogue' of the Afro-Communist type (Grinin *et al.* 2022), and as Type II coupvolution (Korotayev *et al.* 2025a, 2025b).

<sup>4</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>5</sup> For details on the secret intelligence service of Al-Shabaab see Besenyő and Sinkó 2024.

<sup>6</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>7</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

<sup>8</sup> This organization is recognized as terrorist and banned in the Russian Federation.

## REFERENCES

- Abbink, J. 2009a. The Islamic Courts Union: The Ebb and Flow of a Somali Islamist Movement. In Ellis S., van Kessel I. (eds.), *Movers and Shakers. Social Movements in Africa* (pp. 87–113). Leiden: Brill.
- Abbink, J. 2009b. *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Leiden: African Studies Centre.
- Abdullahi, M. D. 2001. *Culture and Customs of Somalia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Abdullahi, A. 2021. The Conception of Islam in Somalia: Consensus and Controversy. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 21 (1): 7–16.
- Ahmad, A. 2015. The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia. *International Security* 39 (3): 89–117.
- Ahmed, A.J. 1995. *The Invention of Somalia*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- Alekseyev, A. 2020. Ne strana, a odno nazvaniye. Chto proizoshlo v Somali za 60 let nezavisimosti [Not a country, just a name. What has happened in Somalia in 60 years of independence?] *Kommersant*, July 4. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4405229>.
- Aleynikov S. V. 2012. *Politicheskaya situatsiya i problemy natsionalnogo primireniya v Somali* [The Political Situation and Problems of National Reconciliation in Somalia]. Moscow: Institut Blizhnego Vostoka.
- Aleynikov S.V. 2014. *Somaliyskie plemena* [The Somali Tribes]. Moscow: Institut Blizhnego Vostoka.
- Ali Ismail, I. 2010. *Governance: The Scourge and Hope of Somalia*. Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishers.
- Ambroso, G. 2002. *Clanship, Conflict and Refugees: An Introduction to Somalis in the Horn of Africa*. Geneva: UNHCR.
- Bacon, T., and Muibu, D. 2019. The Domestication of Al-Shabaab. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 10 (3): 279-305.
- Bacon, T., and Warner, J. 2021. Twenty Years After 9/11: The Threat in Africa – The New Epicenter of Global Jihadi Terror. *CTC Sentinel* 14 (7): 76–90.

- Bamfo, N.A. 2010. Ethiopia's Invasion of Somalia in 2006: Motives and Lessons Learned. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 4 (2): 55–65.
- Barnes, C., and Hassan H. 2007. The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2): 151–160.
- Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., and Korotayev, A. 2024. Introduction: Terrorism and Political Contention in North Africa and the Sahel Region. In Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., Korotayev, A. (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Contention. New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel Region* (pp. 1–17). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Besenyő, J., and Sinkó, G. 2024. The Role of the Amniyat in Enforcing the Mandate of the Leadership and Silencing Dissent in Somalia. In Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., and Korotayev, A. (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Contention: New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel Region* (pp. 403–420). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Besenyő, J., and Sólyomfi, A. H. 2024. Mali: Safe heaven to terrorist? In Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., and Korotayev, A. (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Contention: New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel region* (pp. 155–169). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Brazhalovich, F. L., Klyuchnikov, M. I., Lukyanov, A. I. 2016. Politiko-geograficheskie aspekty problemnoy gosudarstvennosti (na primere Somali) [Political and Geographical Aspects of Problematic Statehood (by the example of Somalia)]. *Geografiya i prirodnye resursy* 2: 181–188.
- Demeke, M. A. 2014. Conflict Resolution Responses of IGAD and AU to the Somalia crises. *International Journal of Political Science and Development* 2 (10): 248–257.
- Drysdale, J. G. S. 1994. *Whatever Happened to Somalia?* London: Haan.
- Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., Fennig, C. D. (ed.) 2022. *Ethnologue: Languages of Africa*. Dallas, TX: SIL International.
- Eickelman, D. F. 2001. *The Middle East and Central Asia: an anthropological approach*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Elmi, A. A. 2010. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London: Pambazuka Press.
- Farah, A. Y., and Lewis, I. M. 1997. Making Peace in Somaliland. *Cahiers d'études africaines* 37 (146): 349–377.
- Gellner, E. 1971. *Saints of the Atlas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Grinin, L. 2020. Radikal'nyy islamizm, religioznyy faktor i destabilizatsiya v stranakh Afraziyskoy makrozony nestabil'nosti [Radical Islamism, the Re-

- ligious Factor and Destabilization in the Countries of the Afrasian Macrozone of Instability]. In Grinin L. E., Korotayev A. V. (eds.), *Sistemnyi Monitoring Globalnyh i Regionalnyh Riskov* [Systemic Monitoring of Global and Regional Risks] (pp. 809–827). Volgograd, : izd-vo Uchitel.
- Grinin, L., Grinin, A., and Korotayev, A. 2022. 20<sup>th</sup> century revolutions: characteristics, types, and waves. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9 (1): 1–13.
- Grinin, L., Korotayev, A., and Tausch, A. 2019. *Islamism, Arab Spring, and the Future of Democracy. World System and World Values Perspectives*. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Hansen, S. J. 2013. *Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005–2012*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Issaev, L. M., Aisin, M.B., Medvedev, I. A., and Korotayev, A. V. 2020. Islamic Terrorism in the Middle East and its Impact on Global Security. *RUDN Journal of Political Science* 22 (4): 713–730.
- Issaev, L., Fain, E., and Korotayev, A. 2021. Impact of the Arab Spring on Terrorist Activity in the Sahel. *Ideology and Politics Journal* 19 (3): 34–49.
- Issaev, L. M., Korotayev, A. V., and Bobarykina, D. A. 2022. The Global Terrorist Threat in the Sahel and the Origins of Terrorism in Burkina Faso. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* 22 (2): 411–421.
- Joseph, D., and Maruf, H. 2018. *Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of Al-Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hassan A. 2021. Leadership Attitude and Clan-Structure: Lessons for Leadership Practices in Contemporary Post-Conflict Nation Building in Somalia. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 3 (1): 1901–1905.
- Issa-Salwe A. M. 1996. *The Collapse of the Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy*. London: Haan.
- Kaplan E. 2006. *Somalia's High Stakes Power Struggle*. Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Kasaija, A. P. 2013. The UN-led Djibouti Peace Process for Somalia 2008–2009: Results and Problems. In *Somalia: State Collapse, Terrorism and Piracy* (pp. 13–34). London: Routledge.
- Keatinge, T. 2014. *The Role of Finance in Defeating Al-Shabaab*. London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies/RUSI.
- Khayre, A.A.M. 2014. Self-Defence, Intervention by Invitation, or Proxy War? The Legality of the 2006 Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia. *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 22 (2): 208–233.

- Kononov, I. 2010. *Raspad gosudarstva i grazhdanskaya voyna v Somali* [State Collapse and Civil War in Somalia]. Moscow: Sotsial'no-politicheskaya mysl'.
- Korotayev, A. 1996. *Pre-Islamic Yemen: Socio-Political Organization of the Sabaean Cultural Area in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Korotayev, A. 2003. Penetration of Nomads to the Arabian South and Formation of Tribal Organization among the North-East Yemen Agricultural Population. In Kradin N., Bondarenko D., and Barfield T. J. (eds.), *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution* (pp. 114–122). Moscow: Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Korotayev, A. 2020. Evolution of Sociopolitical Institutions in North-East Yemen (The 1st Millennium BCE – the 2nd Millennium CE). In Bondarenko D. M., Kowalewski S. A., and Small D. B. (eds.), *The Evolution of Social Institutions. Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 161–184). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Korotayev, A. 2021. From Chieftdom to Tribe? Trends in the Evolution of Political Systems in North-Eastern Yemen in the Last Two Millennia. *Nouvelles Chroniques du manuscrit au Yémen* 32: 93–115.
- Korotayev, A. V., Askerov, M.-A. I., and Issaev, L. M. 2025a. August 2024 events in Nigeria. Failed coupvolution in the context of West African political processes. *Politeia-Journal of Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Sociology of Politics* 117 (2): 137–159.
- Korotayev, A., Fain, E., Zinkina, J., and Issaev, L. 2025b. On Coupvolution: a Type of Revolutionary Episodes in the Modern West African Context. *Critical Sociology*. DOI: 10.1177/08969205251366848.
- Korotayev, A., Issaev, L., Ilyina, A., Zinkina, J., and Voronina, E. 2024. Revolutionary History of Niger: From Independence to 2023 Coup. In: Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., Korotayev, A. (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Contention. New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel Region* (pp. 169–194). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Korotayev, A. V., and Khayrullin, T. R. 2024. Traditional Clan and Tribal Structures and Contemporary Political System of Somalia. *Vostok (Oriens)* 1: 137–152.
- Korotayev, A., and Khokhlova A. 2022. Revolutionary Events in Mali, 2020–2021. In Issaev L., Korotayev A. (eds.), *New Wave of Revolutions in the MENA Region. A Comparative Perspective* (pp. 191–218). Cham: Springer Nature.

- Korotayev, A., and Voronina, E. 2024. Revolutionary and Quasi-Revolutionary Events in Somalia (1960–2023). In: Besenyő, J., Issaev, L., Korotayev, A. (eds.), *Terrorism and Political Contention. New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel Region* (pp. 349–400). Cham: Springer Nature.
- Lewis, I.M. 1961. *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*. London: James Currey.
- Lewis, I. M. 1988. *A Modern History of the Somalia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Lewis, I. M. 1994. *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho*. London: HAAN.
- Lewis, I.M. 2008. *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: A Guide to cultural History and Social Institutions*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Le Sage, A. 2002. Somalia: Sovereign Disguise for a Mogadishu Mafia. *Review of African Political Economy* 91: 132–138.
- Malinowski, B. 2015. *Freedom and Civilization*. London: Routledge.
- Marchal, R. 2007. Warlordism and terrorism: how to obscure an already confusing crisis? The Case of Somalia. *International Affairs* 83 (6): 1091–1106.
- Massoud, M. F. 2021. *Shari`a, inshallah: Finding God in Somali legal politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Menkhaus, K. 2003. Bantu Ethnic Identities in Somalia. *Annales d’Ethiopie* 19: 323–339.
- Mubarak, M. 2018. *Taming the Clans: Al-Shabab’s Clan Politics*. Mogadishu: Hiraal Institute.
- Mubarak, M. 2020. *A Losing Game: Countering Al-Shabab’s Financial System*. Mogadishu: Hiraal Institute.
- Okure, A. 2007. Somalia Mourns a ‘Golden Era’ as Crisis Worsens. *Africa Faith & Justice Network*, December 11. <https://afjn.org/somalia-mourns-a-golden-era-as-crisis-worsens/>.
- Omenma, J. T., Hendricks, C., and Ajaebili, N. C. 2020. al-Shabaab and Boko Haram: Recruitment Strategies. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 27 (1): 2–11.
- Osman, A. A., and Abebe, G. K. 2023. Rural Displacement and Its Implications on Livelihoods and Food Insecurity: The Case of Inter-Riverine Communities in Somalia. *Agriculture* 13 (7): 14–44.

- Osman, J. 2022. Inside Al Shabaab: The extremist group trying to seize Somalia. *Channel 4 News*, June 15. URL: <https://www.channel4.com/news/inside-al-shabaab-the-extremist-group-trying-to-seize-somalia>.
- Paster, M. 2006. *Aspects of Maay Phonology and Morphology*. Claremont, CA: Pomona College.
- Raineri, L. 2022. Explaining the rise of Jihadism in Africa: The Crucial Case of the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34 (8): 1632–1646.
- Robinson, C. 2016. Revisiting the Rise and Fall of the Somali Armed Forces, 1960–2012. *Defense & Security Analysis* 32 (3): 237–252.
- Rudincová, K. 2011. Islamic Movements in Somalia: Global or Local Jihad. *The Scale of Globalization, Think Globally, Act Locally, Change Individually in the 21st Century*. Ostrava: University of Ostrava.
- Sheikh, A. M. 2019. Islamic Groups in Somalia: Ideology, Goals and Objectives. *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education* 16 (2): 55–60.
- Shinn, D. 2004. Fighting Terrorism in East Africa and the Horn. *Foreign Service Journal* 81 (9): 35–47.
- Shirkey Z. 2022. Courts and State-Building: The Welsh Marcher Lordships and the Somali Union of Islamic Courts. *Polity* 54 (2): 197–224.
- Skjelderup, M., Ainashe, M., and Abdulle ‘Qare’, A. M. 2020. Militant Islamism and Local Clan Dynamics in Somalia: The Expansion of the Islamic Courts Union in Lower Jubba Province. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14 (3): 553–571.
- Solomon, H. 2014. Somalia’s Al Shabaab: Clans vs Islamist Nationalism. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 21 (3): 351–366.
- Sumie, N. 2003. Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia. *Global Governance* 9 (4): 459–476.
- Tapper, R. (ed.) 2011. *Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*. London: Routledge.
- Warner, J., and Weiss, C. 2017. A Legitimate Challenger? Assessing the Rivalry between al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in Somalia. *CTC Sentinel* 10: 27–32.
- Webber, L., and Garofalo, D. 2023. The Islamic State Somalia Propaganda Coalition’s Regional Language Push. *CTC Sentinel* 16: 15–19.
- Wise, R. 2011. *Al Shabaab*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

- Yuusuf, M. 2021. *The Genesis of the Civil War in Somalia: The Impact of Foreign Military Intervention on the Conflict*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Zoppi, M. 2015. Greater Somalia, the Never-Ending Dream?: Contested Somali Borders: The Power of Tradition vs. the Tradition of Power. *Journal of African History, Politics and Society* 1 (1): 43–64.
- Zoppi, M. 2018. Somalia: Federating Citizens or Clans? Dilemmas in the Quest for Stability. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 36 (1): 54–70.