

**A Delayed Response:
Analysis of the International Response to the
Famine in Somalia**

by

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B.A. (Criminology), Simon Fraser University, 2006

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts International Studies

in the

School for International Studies
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2013

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Abstract

This paper examines the causes for the delay in the humanitarian response to the famine in Somalia in 2011. The international community failed to respond to early warnings with actions that could have halted the spread of food insecurity and malnutrition. Using the case study of Somalia, this paper analyzes a variety of factors that could have contributed to the delayed response. The results of the case study indicate that the key factors were: donor fatigue and a lack of political interest, mismanagement by the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, and a lack of media attention. Alternative explanations, such as a lack of access and security concerns, and counter-terrorism legislation, are unworkable as causes of the delay primarily because these conditions continued to exist when donors did ultimately respond to the famine. This paper recommends that donors and humanitarian organizations work to better understand the benefits of early action.

Keywords: Somalia; humanitarian aid; famine; early warning systems; drought; lessons learned

Dedication

*This paper is dedicated to the people of Somalia
and their continued struggle for peace.*

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the faculty and staff at the School for International Studies for their support and guidance. Specifically, I would like to thank my senior supervisor, Dr. Jeffrey Checkel, and my second supervisor, Dr. Elizabeth Cooper, for their advice and feedback. I would also like to thank Dr. Onur Bakiner for his enthusiasm for teaching and his patience in dealing with the “Complex Emergencies Girls”. I would like to thank my 2011-2012 cohort in the International Studies program for our inspired discussions, as well your friendship and support. A special thank you goes to Wilson for her fantastic editing skills and feedback.

I would also like to thank those who inspired me to pursue my passion in humanitarian affairs and the plight of Somalia, especially Michael, Jeannette, Patrick and the rest of the Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Group at DFAIT. I would also like to thank my fellow Somalia enthusiasts for understanding my passion for this often forgotten country: Bob at CIDA, Sarah at PCO and Erica at CSIS.

A huge thank you to my parents for taking me in and, as always, for providing all the love and support I could ever ask for. Thank you to my dad for helping with editing as well. The completion of this paper would not have been possible without Garreth’s support and patience, as well as the constant companionship of my two dogs, Abby and Zoey.

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List of Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Plan
CAD	Canadian Dollars
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFAIT	Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia
FSNWG	Food Security and Nutrition Working Group
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

In July 2011, Southern Somalia had become the worst humanitarian crisis¹ in the world and yet, the international community² was just starting to notice. Famine early warning systems had begun their campaign of warnings and alerts almost an entire year earlier, advising the international humanitarian community³ to prepare for a food security crisis and to respond to the food security needs of Somalis. Although the famine early warning systems in Somalia are known to be reliable and accurate, preparations and responses were minimal. The international community had been warned about the deteriorating food security situation throughout 2011, but it was not until the United Nations (UN) declared a famine in regions of Southern Somalia in July 2011 that donor funding was allocated to respond to the crisis (See Appendix A for a timeline of the early warnings, the famine and the response). This paper examines the question of why the international community was slow to respond to the famine in Somalia and what can be done to ensure this does not happen again.

1.1. Importance of Research Question

Droughts and famines will continue to occur worldwide and affect millions of people. This paper, therefore, addresses issues which will reoccur and has future value in adding to the emergency response literature. Droughts are the world's costliest

¹ Crisis, emergency, humanitarian crisis and humanitarian emergency are all used interchangeably in this paper to describe the famine in Somalia.

² International community or donor governments are defined in this paper as Western donor countries. In this paper, the responses of Canada and the United States are primarily analyzed.

³ Humanitarian community or international humanitarian community includes all actors in the humanitarian system, including all humanitarian non-governmental organizations, all UN organizations involved in humanitarian response and the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. It may also include civil servants working on humanitarian issues for government aid agencies, such as CIDA or USAID.

natural disasters, causing between \$6-8 billion USD in losses every year, and are the second biggest driver of migration (Kindra, 2013). The case study of Somalia will be used to explore why donors, specifically Canada and the United States, did not respond to the drought until after the situation was declared a famine in July 2011. The findings from the case study will help provide recommendations on how slow-onset emergencies⁴, and in particular droughts, could be analyzed and responded to differently in the future. The results of this paper can be generalized to other complex emergencies⁵ where humanitarian responses are delayed.

At the height of the emergency in August 2011, there were over 13 million people in the Horn of Africa affected by food insecurity and crisis (See Appendix B for Food Security Map of the Horn of Africa). It is estimated that hundreds of thousands were at risk of starvation and 50,000 to 100,000 people died (Darcy et al., 2012). Those who lost their lives were almost exclusively in Somalia, or in the refugee camps bordering Somalia, and more than half of them were children under five. On July 20, 2011, when the UN declared a famine in areas of Southern Somalia, some 3.7 million Somalis were already dealing with a food security crisis and an estimated 640,000 children were malnourished (UN Secretary-General, 2011). The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia warned that malnutrition rates in Somalia were "the highest in the world, with peaks of 50 percent in certain areas of the country's south" (UN News Centre, 2011, n.p.). The crisis also led to massive displacement with 1.5 million Somalis internally, mostly towards Mogadishu, and approximately 900,000 Somali refugees escaping to the neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2011). In the first eight months of 2011, 150,000

⁴ A slow onset emergency or disaster is defined by UN OCHA as "one that does not emerge from a single, distinct event but one that emerges gradually over time, often based on a confluence of different events" (UN OCHA, 2011, p.3). Drought is a common example.

⁵ A complex emergency is defined by UN OCHA as "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/ or the ongoing United Nations country program. Complex emergencies are typically characterized by: extensive violence and loss of life; massive displacements of people; widespread damage to societies and economies, the need for large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance, the hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints and significant security risks for humanitarian relief workers in some areas" (UN OCHA, 1999, n.p.).

refugees arrived at the Dadaab refugee camps in northern Kenya and 78,000 refugees arrived in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, creating a refugee crisis (UNHCR, 2011).

1.2. Argument

This paper argues that members of the international community were delayed in their response to the famine in Somalia in 2011 primarily due to donor fatigue and a lack of political interest, mishandling of the situation by the UN and international humanitarian organizations⁶ working in Somalia and a lack of media attention. In addition, it will show that the alternative explanations of a lack of access and security concerns and domestic counter-terrorism legislation are unworkable as justifications for the delayed response. With regards to donor countries, attention will be focused on the Canadian⁷ and United States' responses, because they are two of the biggest humanitarian donors in the world and information on their responses is readily accessible. The causes of the delayed response that will be examined are context specific, thus the focus of this paper is on the response in the southern areas of Somalia rather than the northern regions of Somaliland or Puntland. In addition, famine conditions were only present in six southern regions of Somalia, making up approximately half of Southern Somalia (See Appendix C for Famine Map of Somalia).

⁶ International humanitarian organizations or simply humanitarian organizations includes all humanitarian non-governmental organizations, all UN organizations involved in humanitarian response and the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (ICRC). This does not include any donor officials.

⁷ I was also personally involved in the Canadian response to the famine, as a humanitarian policy advisor at Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT). I am aware that this could have biased my analysis of the Canadian response, thus I have specifically avoided commenting on the internal decision making processes within the Canadian Government.

2. Methodology

This research is based on a non-parsimonious positivist approach which attempts to determine the causes of the delayed response to the famine and provide policy recommendations for both donor governments and humanitarian organizations. By using process tracing within a case study, this paper explores “the chain of events or the decision-making process by which initial case conditions are translated into case outcomes” (Van Evera, 1997, p.64). This paper examines the linkages between the hypothesized causes and the delay in the humanitarian response in Somalia by major Western donors, with a focus on Canada and the United States. For example, the observable implications of these linkages would include when the donor countries responded with large amounts of funding and press statements about the situation, in comparison to the timing of widespread media coverage of the famine and the timing of early warnings. By examining policy documents and lessons learned exercises, this paper aims to identify reasons why the humanitarian response was delayed. The paper also attempts to recognize which risks were associated with a response in Somalia, as this will help to link the causes of delay with the response.

This paper examines the linkages between the independent variables: donor fatigue and lack of political interest, mismanagement by the UN and humanitarian organizations, lack of media attention, lack of access and security concerns and domestic counter-terrorism legislation and the dependent variable, the delay in response. This paper looks to determine the intermediate steps between the variables in order to determine which causal linkages connect the independent and dependent variables (Checkel, 2006). Importantly, this research looks at the sequencing of events in order to identify potential linkages. Process tracing is a useful method when testing a theory or hypothesis using a small number of cases or just one case.

2.1. Case Selection

The case study of Somalia was chosen because it is the most recent instance of a famine being declared by the UN. The decision to use the word 'famine' to describe a situation is not one which comes easily nor often. The delayed response to the famine likely cost thousands of lives and thus following Van Evera's case selection criteria, this case falls within the category of intrinsic human importance (Van Evera, 1997). In addition, the case of Somalia became one of policy concern after the famine declaration was made. Within the case study, content and data analysis are used as methodological tools. An analysis of primary source publicly available documents such as UN documents and reports, government press releases and statements, humanitarian organization evaluation reports and policy papers are used to determine what causal mechanisms can be identified as leading to the delay in response. The existing academic literature on famines, early warning systems, the situation in Somalia and previous international responses will provide background information for the case study.

2.2. Constraints

In terms of limitations, there has been a huge amount written on the delayed response to the famine in the past year, so this paper attempts to add something new to the literature without being duplicative of the work already published. The numerous lessons learned and evaluation reports were helpful in determining whether additional evidence of my findings existed. Lack of access to interview subjects was another limitation encountered, which led to the decision to choose document analysis as a primary method. An additional constraint when examining donor government responses to an emergency is the inability to access information about the internal deliberations that might occur before a decision is made public. To deal with this constraint, this research has focused on the public responses of governments to the crisis, rather than commenting on any internal decision making. The use of a case study can sometimes limit the generalizability of results, but it also allows for a more in-depth understanding of the situation and for the examination of more possible independent variables. In the examination of possible causes of the delay in response, it is difficult to separate the

impact of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The reality is that the response was likely delayed for multiple reasons. Therefore, this research attempts to identify the key causes for delay rather than measure the exact amount of impact they had.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Famine in Somalia

A famine can be declared only when certain measures of mortality, malnutrition and hunger are met. According to the UN, these measures are that “at least 20 per cent of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope; acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 per cent; and the death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons” (UN News Centre, 2011, n.p.). According to the World Food Programme (WFP), in recent history famines have been declared in southern areas of Sudan (now South Sudan) in 2008, in the Somali region of Ethiopia in 2000, in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 1996, in Somalia in 1991-1992 and Ethiopia in 1984-1985 (UN News Centre, 2011).

Malnutrition grows exponentially rather than in a linear fashion, which explains why once certain thresholds are met, deaths rise steeply rather than at a steady rate (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012). After a certain point, the human body cannot recover from malnutrition. Even once aid has arrived to the malnourished, the victim may still die afterwards. In refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, Somalis would arrive at the camps to receive aid, only to die a few days later because their bodies were too depleted to be saved (Gettleman, 2011).

In Somalia, drought is a natural phenomenon and in 2011, it elevated the already pronounced vulnerability of Somalis. The underlying causes of the famine were profoundly political, caused by a failure of governance at every level, from local (the malicious role of Al Shabaab⁸) to national (the weakness of the Transitional Federal Government [TFG]) and international (the late response of humanitarian organizations

⁸ Al Shabaab is an Islamist insurgency group which controlled and governed most of Southern Somalia in 2011. Al Shabaab is listed by many countries and the UN as a terrorist group.

and donors). Two consecutive failed rainy seasons created the worst drought in 60 years, causing six regions of Somalia to be labelled famines by the UN. A first sign from the field that this was a not a typical drought season was the increase in distress migration at the beginning of 2011 (Darcy et al., 2012). By September 2011, the six regions declared as famines were: Lower Shabelle, Bakool, Middle Shabelle, Bay and the internally displaced persons (IDP) settlements in Mogadishu and Afgooye (Salama et al., 2012). The early warning systems in Somalia determined that the famine had ended on February 3, 2012 (Hillbruner & Moloney, 2012).

Sen (1999b) argues that democracies do not have famines and has stated that “[f]amines are easy to prevent if there is a serious effort to do so, and a democratic government, facing elections and criticisms from opposition parties and independent newspapers, cannot help but make such an effort” (p.8). In Somalia, none of these are present and the government is dependent on the international community for its existence and the survival of its citizens.

As is the case in many famines, the problem was not “that there [was] no food in Somalia, but that the landless and the urban poor simply [could not] afford it” (Hogendoorn, 2011, p.1). The threat of famine is often associated with the wage to food price ratio, also known as an exchange entitlement collapse, which is characterized by a steep rise in food prices and a collapse in asset prices (Sen, 1999a; Devereux, 2009). Those most in need in Somalia were the underprivileged lower class of peasant farmers and agro-pastoralists who resided in regions controlled by Al Shabaab (Majid & McDowell, 2012). These households were only able to obtain between 40-60% of the food required for their survival (Salama et al., 2012). Access to food was only one of the challenges. In addition, there was a “livelihoods crisis; a health crisis; a water access crisis; and a protection crisis” (Darcy et al., 2012, p.11).

3.2. Early Warning Systems in Somalia

In 1985, after the Ethiopian famine, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) created the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). The network operates internationally with partners to monitor and identify

potential food security threats. Through monthly updates, warnings and alerts, FEWS NET advises governments and international organizations on potential threats in order to promote action to mitigate food insecurity (FEWS NET, 2012). The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) is a regional inter-agency coordination group responsible for bringing together stakeholders for advocacy and response coordination purposes (FSNWG, 2010). Another early warning group, the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU), run by the FAO, provides information and analysis to improve decision making based on food insecurity indicators and nutritional needs (FSNAU, 2012). It seeks to address the underlying causes of food and livelihood insecurity. During the months prior to the famine, all three groups provided updates on the situation in Somalia and released emergency bulletins and alerts. Though access to relevant information is difficult in Somalia, the country “has one of the most sophisticated early warning systems in Africa” (Darcy et al., 2012, p.18). Due to a history of droughts in the region, Somalia’s early warning systems are well established, thoroughly tested and well respected.

Within all early warning systems, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) framework is used to identify the level of food security for an area under examination. The IPC framework is used to facilitate analysis of food security conditions based on available indicators, such as local knowledge, satellite imagery, rainfall measurements and crop growth data (Majid & McDowell, 2012; Dvorak, 2011). The IPC framework consists of five levels of food security: Generally Food Secure, Chronically Food Insecure, Acute Food and Livelihoods Crisis, Humanitarian Emergency and Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe (FSNAU, 2012). When the UN declared that six regions of Somalia were classified as famines, it is the IPC framework which was used to measure the level of food security. Since the famine, the IPC has added two additional phases which should facilitate early response: Imminent and Risk of Worsening (ALNAP, 2011). One concern cited by humanitarian organizations as a reason for the delay in response to the famine is that many regions of Somalia are always classified as “humanitarian emergency”, thus indicating to donors that the humanitarian situation is always grave and thus the lead up to the famine was considered ‘normal’ for Somalia (Maxwell et al., 2012). The ‘normalization of crisis’ in Somalia will be examined in section 4.1.

As early as August 2010, when La Niña⁹ conditions were confirmed, FEWS NET warned that food security would be a concern in the Horn of Africa. In November 2010, they confirmed that more severe food insecurity would occur in Kenya and Somalia after January/February 2011 (FEWS NET, 2010). In November 2010, FSNWG held a meeting to discuss coordinated response options to mitigate the predicted food security concerns that would begin in January 2011. They warned the humanitarian community to act urgently (FSNWG, 2010). FSNAU's first news release on the impending crisis was released on November 26, 2010 and noted the potential negative impacts of La Niña on the region (FSNAU, 2010). In January 2011, they warned of a severe water shortage, increased malnutrition, increased food prices, hoarding of food, livestock deaths, selling off of animals and a deepening humanitarian crisis (FSNAU, 2011). On June 7, 2011, FEWS NET stated in a food security alert that "[t]his is the most severe food security emergency in the world today, and the current humanitarian response is inadequate to prevent further deterioration" and that "in the absence of a significant humanitarian intervention, crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity are expected to persist, if not deepen, through at least early 2012" (FEWS NET, 2011, p.1).

Between August 2010 and the famine declaration in July 2011, FEWS NET and FSNAU released 78 bulletins and conducted over 50 briefings on the deteriorating situation in the Horn of Africa to agencies and donors, yet, there were no serious attempts by donors to scale up emergency responses until after the famine was declared (Bailey, 2012). According to one aid official interviewed by Darcy et al. (2012), "it is hard to overstate the impact of the 'F' word" (p.18).

3.3. Background Situation in Somalia

Somalia has been a 'failed' state for over 20 years and regularly tops the multitude of indexes on failed states and armed conflict, as well as coming in last on all human development scales. Though the concept of a failed state is disputed, experts agree that Somalia is likely the only state which inarguably and unambiguously meets

⁹ La Niña is an ocean atmosphere phenomenon which creates abnormal weather patterns worldwide. Specifically in Somalia, it interrupted two seasonal rain periods in 2010 and 2011.

the definition of a failed state (Carment, 2003; Gruffydd Jones, 2008; Collier, 2009). It is described as being unable to provide basic services and ensure the safety and security of its citizens, including access to food and water (Foreign Policy, 2011). Many of the causes of the crisis are chronic or structural, such as the effects of 20 years of conflict, consecutive droughts, eroded livelihoods, resource scarcity and absence of services and effective governance (Darcy et al., 2012). Without a functioning government, Somalia lacks the safety net that a government provides to its citizens in times of crisis (Carment, 2003).

After more than 15 reconciliation attempts, four international peacekeeping/peace enforcement missions, at least three foreign invasions, two famines and billions of dollars spent by donors on aid projects and initiatives, the despair and devastation of war continues for ordinary Somalis (Menkhaus, 2009). Somalia is the result of arbitrary colonial borders having divided a homogeneous ethnic community into four countries: Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya (Hesse, 2011). Since the fall of dictator Siad Barre¹⁰ in 1991, there has been a string of unsuccessful and corrupt governments, none of which have been able to gain control over the whole country. Currently, the de-facto governing force in most of South and Central Somalia is Al Shabaab, an extremist terrorist group which deems foreign food aid to be unnecessary and harmful to Somali farmers. In 2010 and 2011, the group banned most foreign humanitarian organizations including WFP from operating in areas under its control, thus deepening the famine in Southern Somalia (Bryden, 2011).

Somalia has a history of food security challenges due to regular droughts, failed harvests, flooding and conflict-related displacement. In addition, high inflation of food prices and market volatility, as well as export bans and lack of trade opportunities, have left Somalis with some of the world's worst indicators in terms of malnutrition and access to food and water (Hemrich, 2005). Food security in Somalia relies heavily on the Gu rains in April through June and the Deyr rains in October through December (Hemrich, 2005). In 2011, Southern Somalia had the lowest recorded levels of rainfall in 50 years (Maxwell & Fitzpatrick, 2012). People in the southern regions of the country are more

¹⁰ Siad Barre was the military dictator and president of Somalia from 1969 to 1991.

affected by drought as the inhabitants are mostly sedentary farmers, in comparison with the nomadic pastoralists in the north, and their livelihoods are more dependent on regular rainfall (Lewis, 2002). The droughts which affect the Horn of Africa used to occur every 10 years, then every five years. Now they occur every two years and the droughts are more prolonged, likely due to the effects of climate change (Erasmus et al., 2012).

When famine struck in 2011, the majority of Southern Somalia had been inaccessible to many humanitarian organizations since January 2010, when Al Shabaab had ordered most UN and other humanitarian organizations to leave (Salama et al., 2012). Prior to January 2010, humanitarian organizations had been able to operate by paying taxes to the local Al Shabaab leadership. In early 2010, threats to the security of their workers became too serious and many organizations were forced to cease operations (See Appendix D for a Humanitarian Access Map of Somalia). The retreat of WFP, previously responsible for providing 30% of the cereal needs for Somalia as a whole, was the most significant of these organizations forced to leave (Darcy et al., 2012).

It is important to note that a previous famine in 1991-1992 struck the same regions, affected the same groups of people and had many identical underlying causes as the 2011 famine. The causes of that famine were identified as being due to the collapse of law and order and state instability. It is estimated that 200,000 people died during the 1991-1992 famine (de Waal, 1997). In 1991, for the first time in its 130 year history, the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (ICRC) was forced to hire armed security guards to protect its employees and had to tolerate high levels of diversion and looting (de Waal, 1997). During the response to the 2011 famine, no humanitarian organization would risk working in Somalia without an extensive security apparatus.

3.4. International Community's Role in Somalia - Political and Military Interventions

Many of the key causes of instability, such as conflicts over clan alliances, resources and territory, have been exacerbated by unfortunate international interference

and misjudgements. At the end of the Cold War, strategic interest in Somalia dissipated, which caused the United States and Russia to withdraw aid. Disastrous interventions to help alleviate the famine by the UN and United States in the early 1990's led Somalis to see the international community as its adversary (Menkhaus, 2009). At the time, Operation Restore Hope¹¹ was called philanthropic imperialism, or "the military occupation of an independent country on humanitarian grounds" (de Waal, 1997, p.179). The international community quickly lost interest in Somalia after the failed peacekeeping attempts, with the final withdrawal of UN troops in 1995 (Lyons & Samatar, 1995).

Between 1991 and 2004, there were 14 failed reconciliation conferences supported by the international community (Menkhaus, 2007). Each tried to establish a government of nation unity, but none were successful in stopping clan warlords from fighting for access to power, land and legitimacy (Cassanelli, 2003). The TFG, put in place by the international community in 2004, is widely seen as ineffective, unpopular, unrepresentative, corrupt and lacking any legitimacy from Somalis (Menkhaus, 2010). In 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an umbrella group of Islamists, ousted the TFG and provided the only stable authority since 1991, restoring law and order and providing some government services (Menkhaus, 2008). In December 2006, when Islamic hardliners prevailed in a power struggle within the ICU, Ethiopia invaded to oust the only semi-successful government Somalia had seen since 1991 and reinstated the TFG. Ethiopia, backed by the United States, was seen as an invading force by Somalis and its two year occupation led to the creation of Al Shabaab, which now controls most of Southern Somalia (Menkhaus, 2009). The United States 'War on Terror' has led to increased support to neighbouring countries willing to engage militarily in Somalia and to drone attacks on suspected Al Shabaab members (Bruton, 2010). In the fall of 2011, Kenya and Ethiopia invaded with hopes of helping the under-resourced and narrowly

¹¹ Operation Restore Hope, also known as Unified Task Force, was a United States-led, UN-sanctioned multinational force which operated in Somalia in 1992-1993 with the mandate of creating humanitarian space to allow for delivery of aid in Southern Somalia.

mandated African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)¹² forces open up aid corridors and drive out Al Shabaab (Bryden, 2011).

3.5. International Funding

Somalia has continuously required significant amounts of humanitarian assistance since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. According to Bruton and Norris (2011), the international financial cost related to Somalia since 1991 is \$55.3 billion USD, mostly in the form of aid, military and terrorism responses, piracy ransoms and remittances. The government is fully financed by the international community: Western donors, the UN and international financial institutions. Very little development assistance is provided in South and Central Somalia as insecurity and conflict make it impossible to operate there. Some security sector funding has been provided by donors to help train and outfit Somali government troops and police officers. In addition, donors and the UN are fully funding AMISOM and its Ugandan and Burundi troops.

In 2011, over \$1.3 billion USD was provided in humanitarian assistance to respond to the needs of Somalis (UN OCHA, 2012). This was an enormous increase from 2010, when \$500 million in humanitarian funding was provided for Somalia, but the increase only occurred after the famine was declared. Every year, Somalia is near the top of the UN's list of countries requiring humanitarian assistance. Leading up to the famine in 2011, funding for Somalia was below average; despite early warnings, funding remained at a level below that of previous years until August 2011 (Bailey, 2012). After the famine declaration on July 20, 2011, and a revised appeal by the UN, funding for Somalia doubled, from under \$600 million USD to approximately \$1.2 billion USD (UN OCHA, 2012).

¹² AMISOM, an African Union operated and UN authorized peace support operation which has been present in Somalia since 2007. It is comprised of over 17,700 military troops and police, mostly from Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Djibouti. Its mandate is to support the Government of Somalia in its efforts to stabilize the country and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid (AMISOM, 2013).

3.6. Delays and Selectivity in International Responses

There have long been concerns within the humanitarian community that inequalities exist with regards to the allocation of emergency aid. Humanitarian organizations have denounced the fact that forgotten or silent emergencies receive much less aid than other emergencies (Fink & Redaelli, 2010). Research by Fink and Redaelli (2010), which analysed data from 20 donors, including Canada and the United States, found that bilateral and strategic factors significantly impact upon donors' decisions regarding allocations of humanitarian aid. Other factors related to the amount of aid provided include proximity to the donor, common borders, being a former colony and being an oil exporting country (Fink & Redaelli, 2010; Dollar & Levin, 2006). Research by Dollar and Levin (2006) found that democracy in the recipient country has been consistently associated with donor decision making since at least 1984. This research also shows a growing relationship between aid allocations and economic governance since 2000 (Dollar & Levin, 2006). Research also shows that allies of donors are far more likely to receive humanitarian assistance than non-allies (Drury et al., 2005).

Researchers have found a significant correlation between more media coverage and higher allocations of aid by donor countries (Drury et al, 2005; Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007; Fink & Redaelli, 2010). Eisensee and Stromberg (2007) argue that certain types of disasters are more newsworthy and thus are more likely to receive government funding. In their research of approximately 5,000 natural disasters, they also found that the United States was less likely to declare a disaster when other large world events were ongoing, such as the Olympics, or when other newsworthy events were in abundance (Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007). Eisensee and Stromberg (2007) found that famines are the least newsworthy of disasters and that fewer than 5% of droughts and food shortages are covered by the news media. They also argue that

“[f]or every person killed in a volcano disaster, 40,000 people must die in a drought to reach the same probability of media coverage. Similarly, it requires forty times as many killed in an African disaster to achieve the same expected media coverage as for a disaster in Eastern Europe of similar type and magnitude.” (Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007, p.694-695)

Drury et al. (2005) note that slow-onset emergencies, such as droughts, are difficult to measure in terms of response, because they are more of a process rather than a specific event with a precise starting point. The international community is more likely to respond to quick onset natural disasters, because there is more certainty with regards to the impact on the population, as well as the humanitarian needs (Haile, 2005). In addition to the type of disaster impacting the allocation of aid, the location of the disaster also has a significant impact. Emergencies located in Europe, South and Central America are more likely to receive news coverage and funding from the United States due to their proximity and historical ties (Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007; Drury et al., 2005).

Past research on the delayed response in Darfur found that competing political priorities, lack of media attention and massive obstruction of access were key reasons for the delay (Slim, 2004). Though the situation in Darfur is a complex emergency, rather than a natural disaster, it is similar to the situation in Somalia as the response is a humanitarian one which has complicating political and security factors. One major difference between the response in Darfur and that in Somalia is that the UN was very vocal in pressing for action in Darfur, though passing off the required action to the newly created African Union (Slim, 2004; Prunier, 2006). Slim (2004) reports that there is usually a critical moment when action is mobilized due to the convergence of political concern and overwhelming information which confirms the seriousness of the crisis. In the case of Somalia, the wakeup call was the UN declaring a famine on July 20, 2011. Slim argues that deciding who is going to do what during a crisis takes more time than it should and that the key lesson from Darfur is that even “when the problem is obvious the solution may not be” (Slim, 2004, p.826).

There appears to be a perplexing inversion of responsibility which occurs during and after the response to a crisis, where primary moral responsibility is transferred from the perpetrators to the responders and where the providers of last resort (i.e. the international humanitarian system) become the first responders (Slim, 2004; Lautze et al., 2012). This inversion leads to a multitude of lessons learned exercises and post-crisis evaluations. Though this research attempts to do a similar task in identifying the causes of the delay, the intention is not to blame the international humanitarian community for causing the famine.

4. ANALYSIS - Why was the Response Delayed?

4.1. Donor Fatigue and Lack of Political Interest

Donor countries, commonly comprised of developed Western nations, have been providing assistance to Somalia and the Horn of Africa region for decades. From 2000 and 2010, the United States provided \$764.0 million USD in humanitarian aid to Somalia, while Canada provided \$115.1 million CAD in humanitarian aid to Somalia (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2013; CIDA, 2013). Multiple conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and droughts have devastated the region and every year donor countries are asked to provide funds to respond to the persistent crises. After many years of crisis, donor countries have begun to question whether or not their funds are resulting in any positive developments on the ground. Donor fatigue refers to the phenomenon that occurs when donors who have previously given choose to stop or when there is a slowness to act by the international community (Lautze et al., 2012). In the case of Somalia, there were no indications of concern by Canada or the United States in the form of press releases or statements prior to the media breaking the story in mid-July 2011.

Humanitarian aid is generally understood to be a strictly life-saving endeavour, but donor governments with political considerations and domestic constituents must show results. With millions of dollars spent on humanitarian and development assistance projects in Somalia, donor governments expected the situation to improve, but it has actually worsened in recent years. In addition to the frustration felt by donors, many Somalis also “doubt the will of international actors to provide help given the failure of political reconciliation efforts” (Hammond & Vaughan-Lee, 2012, p.2).

Domestic issues and foreign policy considerations are generally prioritized over humanitarian concerns. Bailey (2012) notes that politics matter most and that a political decision is needed in order for funds to be released in response to early warnings. The

risks involved in early action stopped many donors from contributing early. Without specific evidence of an emergency, it is difficult for politicians to explain to their constituents why funding is being allocated to a crisis which does not yet exist. Governments must be able to “demonstrate impact – something that is difficult to do when disaster has been averted” (IRIN News, 2011, n.p.).

There is a lack of strategic and political interest by foreign governments in Somalia and a reluctance by donors to get embroiled in the complex political and security situation there (Hillbruner & Moloney, 2012). Once the media began broadcasting the story widely as evidenced in section 4.3, there was a change in how donors measured political interest, as domestic audiences began to push for a humanitarian response. Resources are scarce in Somalia, and few countries have direct interests in the country. Nevertheless, some interests, including counter-terrorism activities, are seen as extremely important to donor countries such as the United States. Al Shabaab’s recruitment from the West and Somalia’s hosting of terrorist groups are especially troubling for the United States. With so many Somalis living abroad and having dual citizenship, the potential for domestic terrorist threats is heightened. This diaspora is also an important component of the Somali economy, which contributes millions of dollars every year in remittances to their relatives in Somalia (Maxwell et al., 2012). Somalis living in the West also put pressure on their governments to respond. It is estimated that as many as 170,000 Somalis are living in Canada and 86,000 Somalis in the United States (DFAIT, 2012; MPR News, 2010).

Somalia has often been seen not only as a failed state, but also a state where humanitarian emergencies and human suffering have been normalized. Bradbury (1998) describes this normalization as “a creeping acceptance of higher levels of vulnerability, malnutrition and morbidity” (p.330). Since the 1990s, it has been accepted that Somalis will be subject to multiple hardships, such as some of the worst infant and maternal mortality rates in the world, large-scale permanent displacement and endemic diseases, while still not considered to be in crisis. The belief that solutions to Somalia’s problems are internal continues today, which provides a reasonable rationale for the international community to reduce assistance to Somalia and pass the burden onto Somalis (Bradbury, 1998). Somalia has cyclical droughts and many in the international community believed that 2011 was just another bad year and not necessarily worthy of

emergency response (Lautze et al., 2012). Bradbury (1998) argues that the international community's obsession with self-reliance and sustainability has had a negative effect on humanitarian aid, as it is seen as creating dependency.

Other than lengthening life of its beneficiaries, humanitarian aid often does not create lasting, sustainable or measurable results. It is difficult for donors to measure whether their actions have prevented further suffering. By June 2011, when some of the worst humanitarian indicators were being reported in Somalia, only 28% of the UN Consolidated Appeal Plan (CAP) was funded (UN OCHA, 2011). At that time, the appeal was requesting approximately \$530 million USD, this had to be revised to \$1.06 billion USD in August 2011 (UN OCHA, 2011).

Duffield (2001) argues that at one point in time, neutrality of humanitarian aid was considered above politics, and saving lives was seen as being outside political considerations and bureaucratic constraints. The trouble with this separation of neutrality of humanitarian aid and politics is that it allows for the causes of complex emergencies to continue. Rather than dealing with the politics which created the conflict, humanitarian action deals with the consequences of those politics - the suffering of victims. In the past, donor governments considered humanitarian aid as less political than development aid, but this is starting to change. Governments are now trying to use everything in their tool kit to advance their political and strategic interests internationally, and this includes the use of humanitarian aid for political purposes. DARA (2011) noted that critical decisions were being made in capitals without a full understanding of the complex situation on the ground. Humanitarian organization staff interviewed by DARA (2011) specifically mentioned Canada and the United States when they stated that "donor politics were compromising the ability of humanitarian agencies to respond to the crisis" (p.6). Humanitarian workers noted that Canada had not been neutral in its allocation of humanitarian aid and had put conditions on its aid allocations which were impossible to follow in the context of Somalia (DARA, 2011). Humanitarian staff stated that the United States' policies undermined the humanitarian principles of impartiality and that aid should be provided without discrimination (DARA, 2011).

4.2. Mishandling by the United Nations and Humanitarian Organizations

The mishandling of the crisis by the UN is apparent when one reviews the 2011 UN CAP for Somalia. The plan outlines and prioritizes the humanitarian needs identified for 2011 in Somalia. It was released publicly in November 2010 and stated that Somalia was in need of \$529.5 million USD in humanitarian assistance for 2011 (UN OCHA, 2010). Hillier and Dempsey of Oxfam and Save the Children noted that the appeal “seriously underestimated the number of people in need of emergency aid” (2012, p.11). The amount requested was actually lower than in previous years, though the UN was aware of the potential for a serious drought in 2011 which would increase the need exponentially. Part of the reason for this underestimation was that the assessments for the appeal were conducted in September 2010 and the appeal was released in November 2010, before the failure of the short rains became apparent (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012).

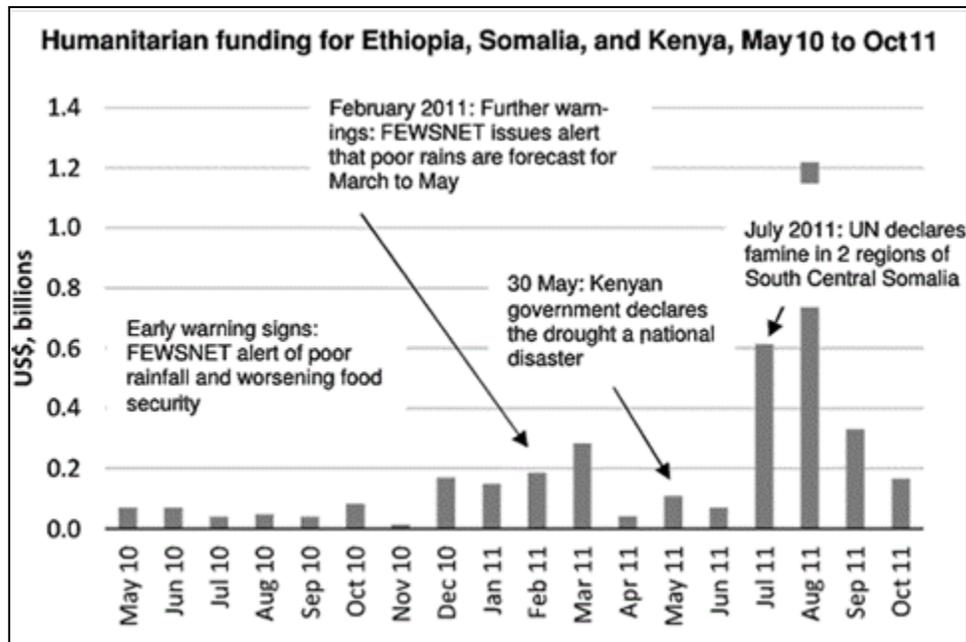
For the 2011 appeal, the UN decided to only request funding for projects that were likely to be implemented safely and securely. The UN was being more reserved about what it considered to be implementable projects. Since access in Somalia was limited, only projects that were put forth by organizations with access were included in the CAP. It is understandable that the UN would want to be realistic with regards to what could actually be accomplished on the ground in Somalia. However, as the CAP is used to determine the level of distress in a country by funding agencies and governments, it should also represent the identified humanitarian needs of the population. Canada, for example, bases its humanitarian funding allocations on the amount of the CAP and the largest appeal generally receives the most funding (CIDA, 2013). Donors interpreted the lower appeal amount as a lower assessment of needs in Somalia, which was not the case. The CAP was a clear misrepresentation of the needs of Somalis. When the early warning systems alerted donors regarding the worsening humanitarian situation, donors did not understand how the situation could have escalated so quickly. For instance, in 2011 Canada had only provided \$11.55 million CAD in humanitarian assistance to Somalia prior to the famine, while in response to a less serious drought in 2009 in Somalia, Canada provided \$34.86 million CAD (CIDA, 2013).

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service (UN OCHA FTS, 2012) shows that in the lead up to the famine, donors were providing less funding than usual in Somalia. This was mostly due to the United States, the largest donor, drastically cutting its funding. United States' aid to Somalia fell in recent years by \$209.4 million USD, from \$237.4 million in 2008 to about \$28 million in 2010 (UN OCHA, 2012), after the United States listed Al Shabaab as a terrorist group in March 2008 (US Department of State, 2012). The listing of Al Shabaab and its impact on funding will be discussed in section 4.4.2.

In the first six months of 2011, funding for the CAP for Somalia was the lowest it had been in four years, despite the warnings of an imminent famine. On August 8, 2011, the UN was forced to revise its CAP to request \$1.06 billion USD in humanitarian assistance for Somalia (UN OCHA, 2011). Governments depend on the UN appeals to decide where and what to fund every year. Funding from donors increased by 600% from June 2011 to July 2011, when the media began to report on the situation and after the UN declared a famine (UN OCHA, 2012). Unfortunately, many donor governments waited until the revised appeal was released before providing additional funding and the UN did not revise its appeal until after famine conditions were realized.

It is apparent from examining the funding data in response to the CAP that donors did not respond until after the famine declaration was made (See Figure 1). The funding data is measured by OCHA FTS and is based on information provided by donor governments and recipient organizations, including the dates on which the funding is announced (UN OCHA FTS, 2012). Although internal deliberations within donor governments could have occurred before the famine declaration, the majority of actual announcements of funding occurred after the declaration. With the announcements of funding coming after the famine declaration, it can be inferred that the decision to respond also came at that time. The funding response to the early warnings was similar to years of "normal" humanitarian need in Somalia (Maxwell et al., 2012). The following chart from Hillier and Dempsey (2011) uses data from the OCHA FTS and FEWS NET to show "the absolute failure to translate early warning to early action" (Bailey, 2012, p.1):

Figure 1: Humanitarian Funding for Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, May 2010 to October 2011.



(Hillier & Dempsey, 2012, p. 11)

Humanitarian organizations, such as Oxfam, World Vision and Médecins Sans Frontières, first drew attention to the impending drought in early 2011, warning governments that this could become a serious concern if seasonal rains in April and May were lacking (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012; MSF, 2012). Advocacy campaigns about the famine were hampered by the fact that humanitarian organizations and UN agencies often make emergency requests and publish alerts about many disasters, conflicts and crises worldwide (Lautze et al., 2012). When so many emergencies are declared yearly, the public and their governments may begin to pay less attention to the warnings; this is also described as part of the normalization process as described in section 4.1 (Bradbury, 1998). The public may not be able to distinguish between an extraordinary emergency situation, such as that occurring in Somalia, and the regular humanitarian needs which are identified yearly. Though field-based staff and government representatives were aware of the severity of the situation, they often had trouble getting “traction further up the chain from those who needed to act to avert [a crisis]” (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012, p.4).

Darcy et al. (2012) noted in their evaluation of the famine response that the withdrawal of WFP, an essential component of the food economy, from Southern Somalia due to Al Shabaab threats in January 2010, “had consequences that were probably underestimated, masked by the good rains of late 2009 and first half of 2010” (p.16). Other humanitarian organizations misjudged the impact of this withdrawal both in terms of the actual food provided by WFP, and with regards to its logistics capacity (Darcy et al., 2012). WFP is the largest humanitarian organization in the world and was likely the only organization with the ability to mount a country-wide emergency relief operation in response to the famine within a very short timeframe.

Unsurprisingly, decision makers at donor agencies and governments are hesitant to initiate an emergency response based on forecasts and often require hard data before responding. Donor agencies and governments are risk-adverse and consequently not comfortable initiating a response when the results of their intervention are uncertain (Lautze et al, 2012). It is difficult for donors and their voting public to see the impact of early action, because it generally results in the mitigation of crisis, rather than visible results. It is challenging for governments to prove that they stopped a crisis from materializing. It is easier to demonstrate how they responded to a crisis which was already happening. Lautze et al. (2012) explain that the international humanitarian system is “risk adverse, with the cost of overreacting to early warning seen as outweighing the benefits of early action” (p.46). Humanitarian aid is generally reactionary, for that very reason. In order for elected officials to justify the spending of public funds, they must be able to show results. As Hillier and Dempsey state in their evaluation of Oxfam and Save the Children’s response to the famine, “waiting for a situation to reach crisis point before responding is the wrong way to address chronic vulnerability and recurrent drought in places like the Horn of Africa” (2012, p.4).

The lack of contingency planning by the UN and other humanitarian organizations was striking. It appears that many may have thought that a full blown famine was too big to contemplate and as a result did not plan for this worst case scenario (Darcy et al., 2012). Many may have believed that as the situation worsened, WFP would be able to resume operations in Southern Somalia; unfortunately this never materialized. It appears that it did not occur to donors to move their funding from WFP to either the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) or others who were still able to

distribute food in Al Shabaab-controlled areas. On July 22, 2011, Canada provided half of its \$50 million CAD contribution in response to the drought to WFP, which had not been operational in Southern Somalia since early 2010 (CIDA, 2011b). In addition, WFP's food resources were not transferred over to UNICEF quickly enough (Darcy et al., 2012). According to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP, 2011), without flexible funding and pre-planned projects it takes at least four months to scale up a response, so early action and contingency planning are necessary.

4.3. Lack of Media Attention

A famine brought on by drought does not produce the quick impact destruction and loss of life that other disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis, generate. Only once a drought becomes an emergency is it obvious to non-experts (such as the media and their audience) that it requires urgent attention. By the time the famine was declared on July 20, 2011, the window of opportunity to prevent deaths by starvation and massive malnutrition had passed. The media did not pay attention to the impending crisis in Somalia until the famine was well under way and people were already dying. Research by Olsen et al. (2003) showed that for many Western media, it is not really “news if Africa experiences yet another humanitarian disaster” (p.112). As international media personnel were unable to access the areas of Somalia where the famine was at its worse due to security risks, there were virtually no photo opportunities in the lead up to the famine. Few visual images were published to urge the public and governments to act. Shaw (2007) states that the goal of human interest reporting is to invoke public sympathy and increase funding from rich Western countries; this type of reporting is often used in Canada and the United States. To be the focus of mass media, a crisis must meet three preconditions: dramatic and emotive imagery, geographic proximity to the audience and only one crisis at a time during a certain time period (Olsen et al., 2003). As noted by Bailey and Middleton (2011) with regards to the shortfall of emergency funding, “the simplistic explanation for this shortfall is that donors are reluctant to dip into their pockets until international media and humanitarian organizations broadcast images of starving people into living rooms. But this offers little in the way of solutions” (n.p.).

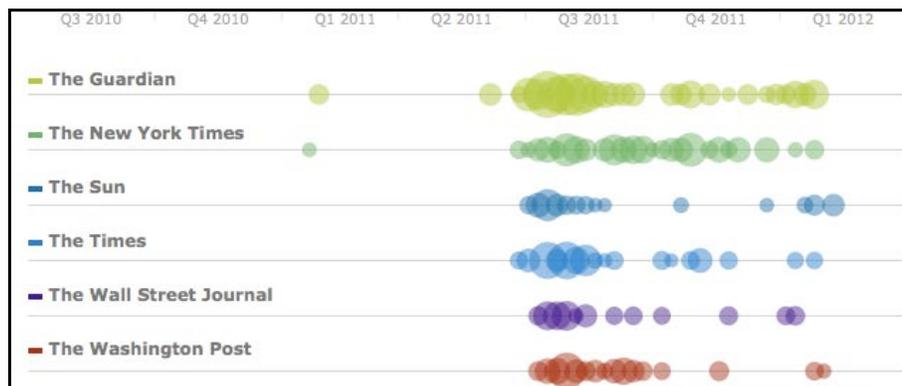
Though there were many anecdotal reports coming from the field that the situation was deteriorating rapidly, without access to media or large scale needs assessments, donors were hesitant to respond based on limited information (DARA, 2011). In early 2011, there were shocking pictures of thousands of dead cattle and other livestock, due to lack of water and pasture, but photos of people dying were not yet available (Truelove & Duncalf, 2012). Other evidence of an imminent crisis that the media could have reported on was the unusual migration of Somalis into Mogadishu, generally considered a dangerous war zone, and the significant increase of Somalis arriving at refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia (Darcy et al., 2012).

The media's impact is related to the ability of organizations to put pressure on governments. If domestic audiences do not know that a famine is occurring, then they will not fault their government for not responding. In a functioning democracy, once an emergency is acknowledged, citizens can force their governments into action (Slim, 2004). Until the domestic audience is aware of a crisis situation, governments are concerned that they will act too soon and get it wrong. They are concerned that without photographic evidence and media attention, they will be accused of acting hastily and of being reckless with taxpayers' money (Olsen et al., 2003). Media attention can provide the cover required for governments to take an issue seriously. Early action is also more likely when there is a direct link to those affected (Lautze et al, 2012). As the hardest hit areas were located in Al Shabaab-controlled territory, it was too risky for any international press or foreign donor representatives to attempt to access these regions (Ali & Gelsdorf, 2012). This lessened the personal connection to affected individuals which may have been able to outweigh the risk factors, including potential criticism from domestic audiences.

Most donors could not access appropriate levels of funding until after the media broke the story, and by then, malnutrition rates were already at dangerous levels (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012). Field level donor representatives and lower level employees in donor agencies and humanitarian organizations who were aware of the crisis were not able to relay the seriousness of the situation through to their managers and decision makers (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012). Although the warnings had started months earlier, the media only began to report on the crisis in late June 2011.

According to Google Trends, searches in Canada related to Somalia more than doubled in July 2011 and then tripled in August 2011 in comparison with the rest of 2010 and 2011 (Google Trends, 2013). According to the Guardian Datablog, which examined media coverage of six major news outlets in the United States and the United Kingdom, 90% of coverage on Somalia came after the famine declaration, rather than responding to the early warnings (Provost et al., 2012). The research also shows that Twitter mentions and Google searches internationally also followed the same timeline (Provost et al., 2012). The table below shows the results of this research on media coverage as well as in relation to aid flows:

Figure 2: Media Coverage of the Humanitarian Crisis in Somalia



(Provost et al., 2012, n.p.)

By the end of July, many reporters were visiting Mogadishu and the refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya in order to report on the crisis. Many humanitarian organizations felt that the media was too focused on the Dabaab refugee camps and were missing the story of Somalis suffering in Somalia (Magee, 2011). The reporters were not alone; international development ministers from around the world wanted to see the devastation first hand as well. Canada’s Minister of International Cooperation visited the Dadaab camps on July 22, 2011 and stated “[t]oday, I saw a true humanitarian crisis at Dadaab. The stories of how the women and children struggled to reach the camp are incredible” (CIDA, 2011b, n.p.). The United States sent their first senior official to the camps on July 18, 2011, followed by larger groups of officials on August 11 and 15, 2011, including the head of USAID (USAID, 2011). By the time the crowds of media and dignitaries arrived, it was already too late for thousands of Somalis.

Once media attention was focused on the famine, there was criticism of the media for using photos of starving children, without considering the dignity of the individual. However, humanitarian organizations did benefit from this in terms of fundraising (Magee, 2011). Disaster Pornography is a term coined in response to the media's reaction to the famine in Somalia in 1991 by Omaar and de Waal (1992). It involves the media's obsession with getting "pictures of grotesque human degradation, with foreign angels of mercy ministering to starving children, juxtaposed with images of trigger-happy teen-age looters" to convince their readership that international assistance is the only answer, rather than enabling people to help themselves (Omaar & de Waal, 1992, n.p.). Broadcasters interviewed by Magee (2011), expressed concerns about "the delicate balance between images that might offend and those that could be seen as sanitising the situation" (p.3).

In addition to the barriers of getting photographs of the victims, there were many other world events which were dominating the international press. In 2011, the Arab Spring, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the global recession were in the headlines. These issues had the full attention of foreign policy and aid officials and were already receiving large amounts of donor funds (Lautze et al., 2012).

The important linkage here is between media coverage of the famine and the funding announcements by Canada and the United States. As evidenced by the above analysis, extensive media coverage only began with the famine declaration on July 20, 2011 and the funding announcements by the United States and Canada came after this date. On July 17 and July 20, 2011, Canada's Minister of International Cooperation expressed her concerns in news releases about the humanitarian situation in Somalia (CIDA, 2011a). At that point Canada had only contributed \$22.35 million CAD in humanitarian assistance to the Horn of Africa countries, of which \$11.55 million CAD was specifically geared to aid Somalis (CIDA, 2011a). By comparison, Canada provided \$34.86 million CAD to address humanitarian needs in Somalia during a previous much less serious drought in 2009 (CIDA, 2013). On July 22, 2011, Canada announced an additional \$50 million CAD contribution to the Horn of Africa in response to the drought and famine, as well as a matching fund (CIDA, 2011b). Canada's response to the famine was quick and generous once the famine declaration was made. As for the United States response, it was not until August 8, 2011 that an additional \$105 million

USD in emergency humanitarian relief funds for the Horn of Africa was announced (USAID, 2011). It is difficult to distinguish between the impact of the famine declaration and the impact of increased media attention on the donors' announcements of funding, because they themselves are related. The famine declaration was clearly a catalyst for the increase in media attention, making the famine declaration a key independent variable as well. From the analysis conducted, it is difficult to determine which of these two independent variables had the most impact on the response, but the timeline demonstrates that both are partly responsible for the increased response.

4.4. Alternative Explanations

4.4.1. *Lack of Access / Security Concerns*

One alternative explanation for the delay in response is that donors believed a lack of access to the regions stricken by famine and security concerns would hamper any efforts to provide aid. In Somalia, there were a number of critical access issues which made aid distribution more difficult (See Appendix D for Humanitarian Access Map of Somalia). For the last decade, Somalia has been one of the most dangerous and lawless places on earth. It is one of the most hazardous places for aid workers and without government control, uncertainty and insecurity reign. Aid workers have been specifically targeted by armed groups and many have been killed, kidnapped or injured in Somalia over the past few years. According to Hammond and Vaughan-Lee (2012), 71 aid workers were killed in Somalia between 2007 and 2009, nearly all of them Somali. Due to insecurity, almost all humanitarian organizations with projects in Somalia operate out of Nairobi, Kenya and conduct remote monitoring. Neither Canada nor the United States had a diplomatic presence in Somalia in 2011, due to security concerns for their staff. The United States closed their embassy in Mogadishu in January 1991 and has only recently announced the re-establishment of official ties with the Government of Somalia (US Department of State, 2013). Canada has not had an ambassador accredited to Somalia since 1990 and has never had a permanent presence in the country (DFAIT, 2012). Both Canada and the United States have travel warnings in place for Somalia advising citizens to avoid all travel to the country due to security concerns (DFAIT, 2012; US Department of State, 2012).

In addition to the insecurity faced by humanitarian organizations, many were banned from operating in areas of Southern Somalia controlled by Al Shabaab, a listed terrorist group. Those organizations still able to work in Southern Somalia had to negotiate with Al Shabaab for access, while staying within the limits of international counter-terrorism legislation which criminalizes material support or assistance to terrorist groups (Menkhaus, 2012). This was a unique challenge, as Al Shabaab was the de-facto governing force in much of the country and their approval was required in order to operate in the areas most affected by the famine.

Some of the largest humanitarian organizations had already been banned by Al Shabaab in 2009 and 2010, and thus were not operational in the famine areas. Over the course of the crisis, Al Shabaab changed its policies with regards to allowing humanitarian aid in areas under its control numerous times. Some Al Shabaab leaders were supportive of the aid, while others denied that a famine existed and blocked famine victims from receiving aid (Menkhaus, 2012). When it became clear that Al Shabaab's leadership was divided and their decisions inconsistent, humanitarian organizations began negotiating with local Al Shabaab leaders village by village in each of their project areas. Some local Al Shabaab leaders actually protected and facilitated the work of humanitarian organizations in their areas, recognizing that being able to provide for the civilian population would be beneficial to them as local leaders in terms of maintaining their loyalty (Menkhaus, 2012).

Access was limited even in areas where Al Shabaab was not the governing force. In Mogadishu, the TFG was nominally in control, though they were largely absent with regards to providing services or caring for their citizens. The TFG was considered by most Somalis as corrupt and inefficient and many believe that they saw the famine and the outpouring of relief coming into Mogadishu as an opportunity to enrich themselves (Menkhaus, 2011). Unfortunately, donor governments are more comfortable working within a state system and often insisted on working with a government authority. The insistence of donors to work with the TFG led to delays in aid distribution, obstructionism and loss of relief goods to corruption. This was especially true for donors, such as the United States, who were interested in aid being used as part of a stabilization agenda (Menkhaus, 2012).

Despite the access constraints and security concerns, there were some UN agencies and humanitarian organizations still working in Southern Somalia throughout the crisis. The ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières continued working throughout the height of the famine. While Al Shabaab was intent on expelling all organizations that were providing general food aid, they were not as concerned with those providing medical care, water and sanitation and nutritional supplements. Al Shabaab was extremely suspicious of any organizations which were associated with the UN because of the UN's support for the TFG and AMISOM. Nevertheless, UNICEF was particularly important in filling the gap left by WFP by taking on general food distribution, while FAO provided cash and vouchers to allow farmers to plant in time for the next rainy season (Darcy et al., 2012). The lack of access in Somalia led many organizations to explore new distribution methods, such as cash transfers by mobile phone, as the traditional ways of delivering aid were simply too susceptible to theft and diversion (Menkhaus, 2012; Ridsdel, 2012; Ali & Gelsdorf, 2012).

Most of the organizations still active in Somalia relied on their national staff and on local partners, rather than insisting on the use of international staff for monitoring purposes. In order to respond in areas where access was a concern, donors would have merely needed to direct their funds to these specific organizations. Once the famine was declared, many donors did this. They found organizations that still had access and allocated their funding accordingly. For example, when Canada announced the recipients of its additional \$50 million CAD in funding, many were organizations that were able to continue operating in Somalia, such as UNICEF and the ICRC (CIDA, 2011c). Regardless of the difficulties funding projects in Somalia after the famine declaration, it was still possible. There are no indications that it would have been any more difficult before the declaration was made. It was a lack of political motivation which was stopping donors, not security and access concerns, as these concerns did not disappear after July 2011.

4.4.2. Counter-Terrorism Legislation

Another explanation for the delay is that governments were restricted by their own counter-terrorism legislation. This legislation would have made it illegal for some

countries to provide assistance in the famine areas, as they were mostly controlled by Al Shabaab, a UN listed terrorist entity. However, once the famine was declared and the public became aware of the dire situation, the legislation was circumvented by donor governments in various ways.

In 2008, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1844 which prohibited member states from providing funds or material assistance to individuals and groups identified by the UN as being a threat to the security of Somalia. The significance of this resolution is that it prohibited the provision of direct or indirect assistance to Al Shabaab. The UN was careful to include a humanitarian exclusion clause in resolution 1844 (2008) and reaffirmed and expanded the exclusion clause in resolution 1972 (2011), which states that “the obligations imposed on Member States in paragraph 3 of resolution 1844 (2008) shall not apply to the payment of funds, other financial assets or economic resources necessary to ensure the timely delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Somalia” (UNSC Resolution 1972, OP4). In response to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Somalia in 2011, the UN eased its assets freeze as well. As a member of the UN Security Council, the United States voted in favour of this relaxation of UN regulations, but they did not ease their own restrictions until August 2, 2011. As part of this context, the UN Sanctions Monitoring Group on Somalia released a report in March 2010 stating that large quantities of WFP food aid had been diverted (Monitoring Group on Somalia, 2010). This concerned donors and caused them expand their due diligence requirements for all projects in Somalia, to the point that many organizations were unable to satisfy them. Organizations were asked to guarantee that no goods or support would be given to Al Shabaab members. This was an unrealistic demand, as organizations did not always know who these members were and support could be defined in a multitude of ways, such as providing food to family members of Al Shabaab members or renting a vehicle from a Somali who then had to pay taxes to the local Al Shabaab leader.

Though the UN ensured that a humanitarian exemption existed in their resolutions, when nations implemented their own domestic counter-terrorism laws, some did not include such exemptions. For example, in March 2010, the Government of Canada chose to list Al Shabaab as a terrorist entity (Public Safety, 2013). The impact of this was grave for humanitarian organizations operating in areas controlled by Al

Shabaab. These organizations were required to work with local authorities in order to successfully implement their projects. The criminal consequences are set out in section 83.03 of the Canadian Criminal Code, which states:

Every one who, directly or indirectly, collects property, provides or invites a person to provide, or makes available property or financial or other related services

(b) knowing that, in whole or part, they will be used by or will benefit a terrorist group

is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years.

(Canadian Criminal Code, 2013, Section 83.03)

By listing Al Shabaab as a terrorist entity, Canada made it clear that any support to the group may lead to criminal prosecution. Though the Government of Canada likely did not have humanitarian organizations in mind for prosecution when including Al Shabaab on the list, these organizations were greatly impacted by its addition because it limited their ability to program in areas controlled by Al Shabaab.

The United States listed Al Shabaab as a terrorist group in 2008 and their humanitarian aid funding for Somalia fell by over \$200 million USD (from \$237.4 million to \$28 million) from 2008 to 2010 (UN OCHA, 2012). Since the United States had previously been contributing 40% of all assistance to Somalia, this had a tremendous impact on the ground (Darcy et al., 2012). The United States was becoming increasingly concerned that food aid was being diverted into Al Shabaab's hands. The food aid was not necessarily giving the terrorist group an advantage, but state department employees were concerned that they may be in contravention of the US Patriot Act by indirectly providing material benefit to a designated terrorist group (Sheriden, 2011).

When the famine was declared and the media publicised the crisis, the US administration was put in a tough situation. The United States Government did not want to be blamed for not responding to the famine, but they also did not want to be accused of aiding and abetting a terrorist group by their political rivals (Menkhaus, 2012). Humanitarian organizations pressured the government to provide them with a waiver allowing them to provide aid in Al Shabaab controlled areas. United States Government

officials were only willing to offer a memo in which they stated that incidental benefits in the form of food or medicine was not the focus of their sanctions enforcement (US Department of the Treasury, 2011). The organizations' lawyers were still not satisfied that this would absolve the groups from possible prosecution and they argued that the government's wording was intentionally confusing (Menkhaus, 2012). In the end, however many humanitarian organizations chose to remain in Southern Somalia to provide the much needed aid that Somalis required to survive.

In addition to the concerns of aid diversion and potential prosecution, humanitarian organizations also had to contend with the politicization of aid. Some donors were encouraging projects in the areas that had recently been abandoned by Al Shabaab and thus were 'newly liberated'. The TFG and AMISOM believed that assistance could serve as a "peace dividend" rather than distribution of aid based on need alone (Darcy et al., 2012). Humanitarian organizations argued that this was in direct contradiction to humanitarian principles and most refused. DARA (2011) reports that although "[d]onors pay lip service to humanitarian principles" (p.7), in reality, foreign and domestic political interests can supersede them.

5. Policy Recommendations

5.1. Recommendations for Donors

5.1.1. *Recommendation 1: Recognize Cost-Effectiveness of Early Action*

This research has demonstrated that donors are risk adverse and have difficulty responding early to potential crises. Donors need to understand the cost-effectiveness of early action, as compared to responding to a full-fledged crisis. This should dispel some of their fears regarding the taking of risks. For example, supporting people in their homes, rather than in camps, is not only much cheaper, but it reduces their vulnerability and provides resilience for the future (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012). Delaying action until a crisis is certain means risking lives and ultimately spending more money responding to the crisis. The UN estimates that “every \$1 spent in prevention saves \$7 in emergency spending” (Dvorak, 2011, n.p). Over \$1.34 billion USD was eventually spent to respond to the famine in Somalia, thus donors would have certainly saved money by funding preventative projects and mitigating the effects of the drought (UN OCHA FTS, 2012).

5.1.2. *Recommendation 2: Establish Triggers for Early Response*

After past instances of delays in responding to food security emergencies, the international humanitarian community chose to invest in early warning systems in order to better prepare themselves (Lautze, 2012). These early warning systems are now in place in Somalia and their accuracy and reliability have been proven. The whole purpose of these systems is to present an opportunity for early action and to mitigate a food security emergency. If early warning systems are going to be encouraged, funded by donors and expected to provide accurate warnings, governments and humanitarian organizations must be willing to respond to their warnings.

In order to ensure that early warnings are responded to, Bailey (2012) has recommended that triggers be established within the IPC framework that will lead to action on the ground. Trigger points need to be linked to flexible funding mechanisms, which can be used quickly and for a variety of responses. The triggers must automatically activate certain mechanisms and there should be consequences for failing to act on these triggers. For example, this process could begin when initial early warnings trigger a small disbursement from a joint fund for planning purposes and risk reduction activities. This takes the risk out of decision making for politicians. This allows for future disbursements to be “linked to pre-agreed triggers and decision points, and where necessary contingent upon future outcomes” (Bailey, 2012, p.vii). If triggers had been in place, the early warnings in November 2010 predicting severe food insecurity would have prompted preventative measures and the warnings of an imminent famine in May and June 2011 would have triggered emergency funding allocations which could have lessened the impact of the drought. A potential challenge to implementing triggers is that a measure of accountability would need to be established to ensure transparency within the funding process.

5.1.3. *Recommendation 3: Respond with No Risk Projects and Use Flexible Funding Options*

In order to mitigate the risks associated with early action identified by donors, when responding to forecasts, donors should be encouraged to first respond with livelihood protection measures. These are projects which would protect assets, by providing vaccinations for animals, improving water points and possibly destocking (Hillier & Dempsey, 2012). These projects would produce measurable results for donors and positive effects for the community even if the crisis does not unfold as expected.

Moving towards flexible funding options is critical because currently many donors have complicated and lengthy funding approval processes, which has a negative effect on the ability to program and fund quickly. This is particularly an issue in Canada where all project funding decisions require approval from Ministers, even in emergency situations. The need for Ministerial approval of all funding decisions has severely hampered Canada’s ability to respond to emergencies in a quick and effective manner (DARA, 2011). Despite alerts from early warning systems that funding was needed in

early 2011 to mitigate the effects of the drought and stop a famine from developing, that did not happen. Funding decisions in response to humanitarian emergencies need to be de-politicized and should be insulated from political agendas. To counteract this, some options include devolution of some funding power to the field level or to expert civil servants and using pooled funds to underwrite early action (Bailey, 2012). In this case, if some decision making had been moved to the field level, funding allocations would have materialized much earlier. A challenge for implementing this recommendation is that decision makers in capitals are unlikely to support the delegation of funding authority to the field level, as it lessens their control over the process.

5.2. Recommendations for Humanitarian Organizations

5.2.1. *Recommendation 1: Include Early Warning Predictions and Identified Needs in UN Appeals*

When the UN's appeal for Somalia was released in November 2010, it only reported the humanitarian situation at that time and did not include any of the early warning forecasts which were predicting a dire humanitarian situation in the coming months. In the future, these appeals should include forecasting measures or predictions based on early warning systems to show the potential for future emergencies. The UN's appeals must clearly identify the humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations, rather than just list the projects that it believes are implementable. The primary purpose of the appeal should be to accurately portray the needs of the population. Had the initial UN appeal for Somalia identified the real identified needs of the population and predictions of a future crisis, donors would have been more likely to respond accordingly.

5.2.2. *Recommendation 2: Respond with Livelihood Interventions to Encourage Resilience*

Droughts are not strictly a food security issue, but according to Global Humanitarian Assistance (2011), humanitarian appeals in the Horn of Africa since 2005 have allocated 50-70% of their appeal to food assistance and only 15% to livelihood interventions. Governments and international humanitarian organizations are still intent on providing food aid, rather than water and seed for fodder and crops, which would

allow for an easier recovery from drought (ALNAP, 2011). Restoring livelihoods is still not considered a humanitarian endeavour, as it is not seen as 'life saving'. Since it falls into the early recovery stage, many donors and humanitarian organizations will not fund it or will not program for it during a humanitarian crisis. Saving livelihoods needs to be advocated for as a life-saving response. If livelihood interventions had been funded in the early stages of the drought, communities would have been better equipped to deal with the challenges they faced. Livelihood interventions could have provided Somalis with the resilience necessary to endure a drought.

5.2.3. Recommendation 3: Invest in Local Staff

Since this research shows that humanitarian access is a challenge in Somalia, humanitarian organizations need to increase the training, knowledge and skills of their local employees. Local employees are vital to providing an effective response in environments such as Somalia. In the event that a crisis occurs in a region where access is limited for international staff, local staff members must be prepared to manage the response themselves. Humanitarian organizations can also complete some tasks in the early stages of a potential crisis before donor funding is allocated. In recruiting expert staff and identifying partners and contractors ahead of time, they can avoid delays from occurring once funding is secured or when the situation deteriorates (Truelove & Duncalf, 2012). Increased investment in local Somali staff would have ensured that humanitarian organizations could continue to operate in areas with limited humanitarian access throughout the crisis.

6. Conclusion

The famine in Somalia in 2011 demonstrated that early warnings of a humanitarian crisis looming were not enough to provoke the international community into action. The international response to the famine in Somalia needed to be analysed to determine the causal factors involved in its delay. This paper shows that it was donor fatigue, a lack of political interest, mismanagement by the UN and humanitarian organizations and a lack of media attention which delayed the humanitarian response. Other potential factors, such as a lack of access, security concerns and counter-terrorism legislation were often cited as challenges. This paper demonstrates that these factors, though important in understanding the context of the situation, were not limiting factors with regards to the actual response. The famine declaration was another variable which impacted the response, as well as catalyzing media attention. The famine declaration by the UN on July 20, 2011 appears to have impelled Canada and the United States to provide additional funding.

As droughts and famines will continue to occur worldwide and affect millions of people, this paper addresses issues which will reoccur and thus adds to the emergency response literature. This research provides recommendations on how slow-onset emergencies, and in particular droughts, can be analyzed and responded to differently in the future. The results of this paper can be generalized to other complex emergencies where humanitarian responses are delayed and to other cases of slow onset emergencies where an international response is not forthcoming. The causes identified in this case of delayed response are worth identifying in other contexts as they are likely impacting responses elsewhere as well. For example, the donor fatigue and lack of media attention identified in this case are easily transferable to other slow onset emergencies. The policy recommendations can be utilized by donor governments and humanitarian organizations to ensure that responses to slow onset emergencies in other parts of the world are responded to in a timely manner in the future.

Future research is needed to determine why donors are investing in early warning systems when research shows that they do not respond based on early warnings and generally wait until a crisis point is reached before forming a humanitarian response. It has been shown that these systems are sophisticated, reliable and technologically sound (Ververs, 2012). Therefore, it is concerning that the same donors who fund the systems and have invested in their development are unwilling to act based on their conclusions. An apparent disconnect exists between those who trust the effectiveness of the early warning systems and those who make the decision to launch a humanitarian response.

The famine in Somalia highlights two failures of the international humanitarian community: “a failure of preventative action, tackling the proximate causes of vulnerability through urgent livelihoods intervention, so building short-term resilience and reducing the need for relief” and “a failure of scaled-up early relief, tackling the most acute symptoms of the crisis at the time when such assistance was most needed in early to mid-2011” (Darcy et al., 2012, p.25). The first failure is a long standing problem in Somalia and needs to be seriously addressed by the international community as a political problem. Until it has a functioning government, Somalia will never be able to address its chronic vulnerabilities self-sufficiently and will forever be dependent on outside assistance. The second failure needs to be addressed to ensure that future slow-onset emergencies, similar to the drought and ensuing famine in Somalia, are responded to quickly and effectively.

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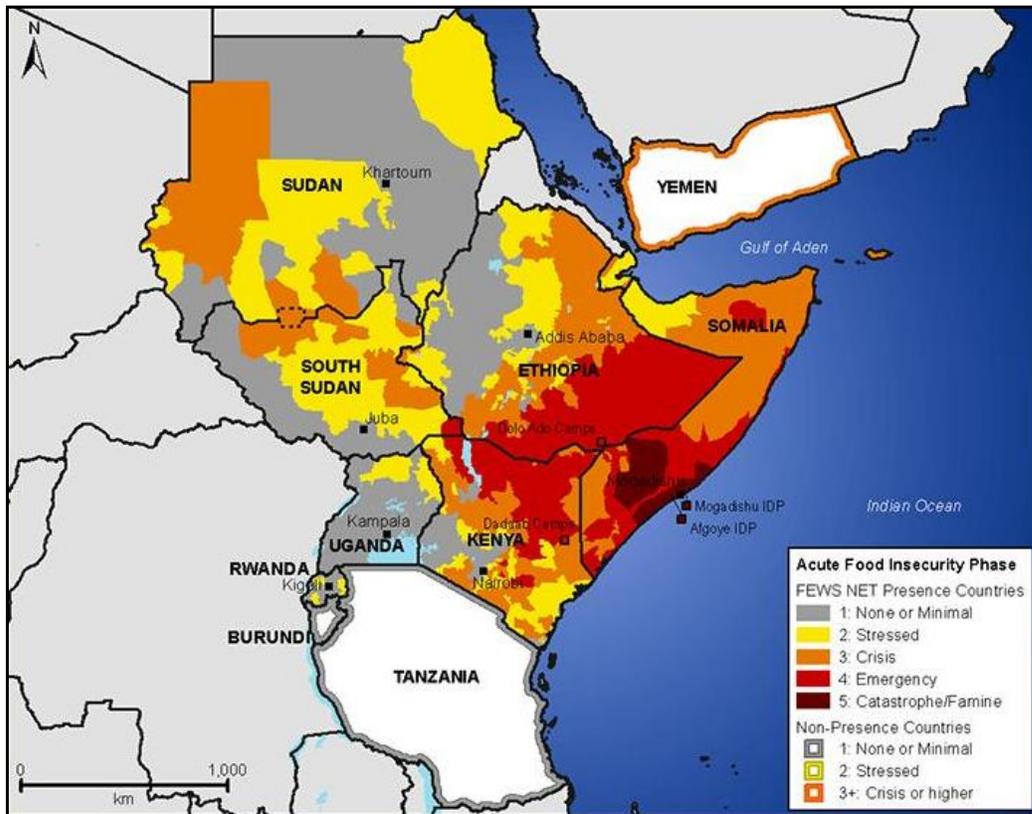
Appendices

Appendix A – Timeline of the Early Warnings, the Famine and the Response

Date	Event of Interest
Early 2010	Many humanitarian organizations, including the World Food Programme, ceased operations in Southern Somalia.
August 2010	First Warning – FEWS NET warned that food security would be a concern in the Horn of Africa.
Oct–Dec 2010	Deyr rains failed in Somalia.
Nov. 2010	Second Warning – FEWS NET confirmed that more severe food insecurity would occur in Kenya and Somalia after January/February 2011.
Nov. 2010	UN launched 2011 Consolidated Appeal Plan for Somalia - \$529.5 million USD.
Nov. 26, 2010	FSNAU's first news release on the impending crisis was released.
Dec. 2010	Total US funding for Somalia in 2010 was \$28 million USD, over \$200 million less than in previous years.
January 2011	FSNAU warned of a severe water shortage, increased malnutrition, increased food prices, hoarding of food, livestock deaths, selling off of animals and a deepening humanitarian crisis.
February 2011	Warning of poor rains expected for April to June 2011 – FEWS NET.
Early 2011	Humanitarian organizations warned donors that the drought would become a serious concern if Gu rains failed.
Apr–Jun 2011	Gu rains failed in Somalia.
May 30, 2011	Kenyan Government declared the drought a national emergency.
June 2011	Only 28% of the UN Consolidated Appeal Plan for Somalia was funded.
June 7, 2011	“[t]his is the most severe food security emergency in the world today” stated by FEWS NET in a food security alert (FEWS NET, 2011, p.1).
July 2011	Media coverage of the drought and humanitarian emergency grows.
July 17, 2011	First Canadian press release expressing concern about the situation in the Horn of Africa.

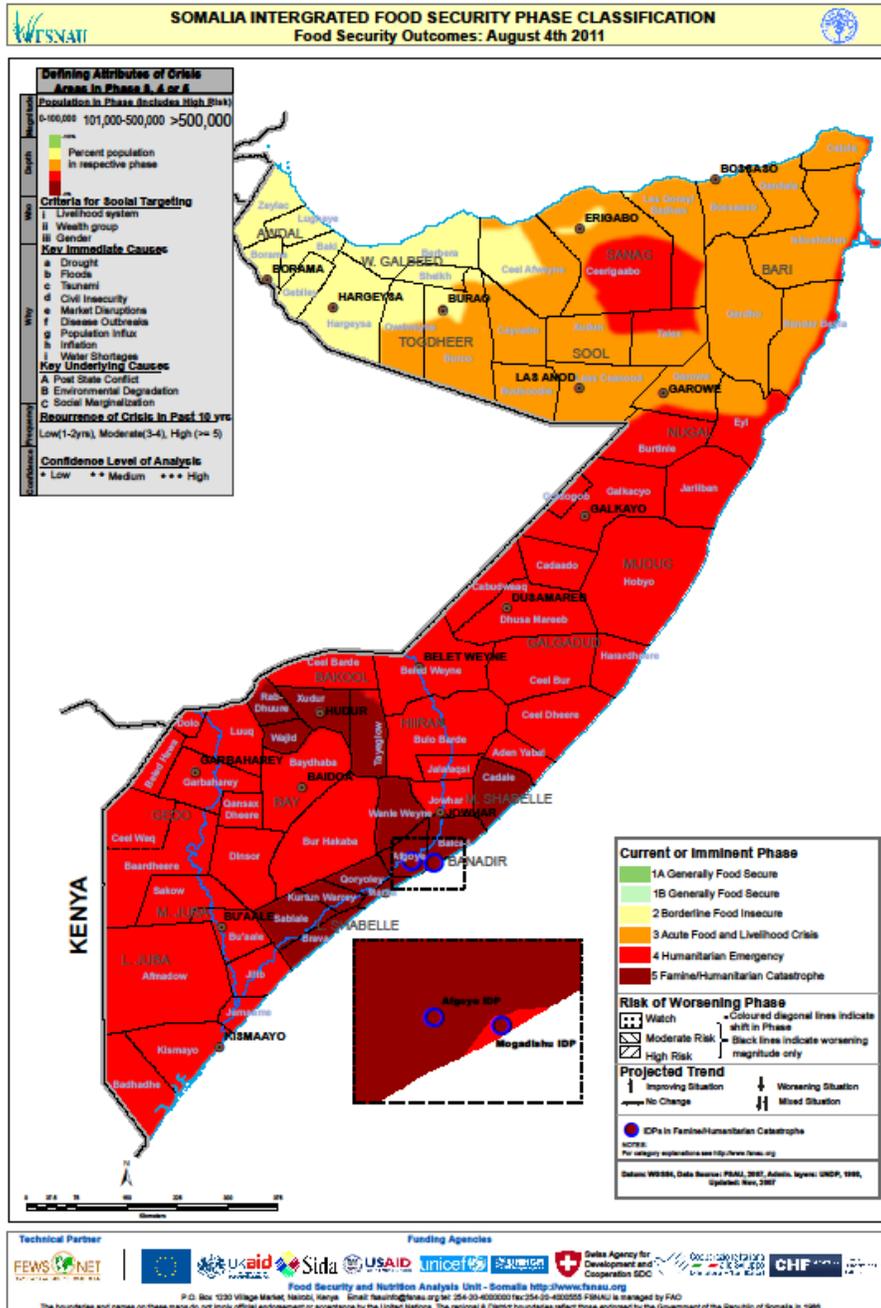
July 18, 2011	First US senior level visitor to Dadaab camps in Kenya.
Btw Aug. 2010 –July 20, 2011	Total Number of early warnings: 78 bulletins and conducted over 50 briefings by FEWS NET and FSNAU on the deteriorating situation in the Horn of Africa.
July 20, 2011	FAMINE DECLARATION - UN declared a famine in two regions of Southern Somalia (Bakool and Lower Shabelle). Canada released a second press release expressing concern about the situation in Somalia.
July 22, 2011	Canada's \$50 million funding announcement - Canada's Minister of International Cooperation visited the Dadaab camps in Kenya and announced a \$50 million CAD funding contribution to the Horn of Africa.
July 27, 2011	First US press release expressed concern about the situation in Somalia and announced an additional \$21 million USD contribution to WFP in Somalia.
July 2011	Funding for Somalia increased by 600% between June and July 2011.
Late Jul– Early Aug. 2011	Media coverage was at its peak.
Aug. 2, 2011	US eases counter-terrorism restrictions on aid for Somalia.
Aug. 3, 2011	UN declared a famine in three additional regions of Southern Somalia (Middle Shabelle and the IDP settlements in Mogadishu and Afgooye).
Aug. 8, 2011	UN released a revised Consolidated Appeal Plan for Somalia and requested \$1.06 billion USD in funding.
Aug. 8, 2011	US announced an additional \$105 million USD in funding for the Horn of Africa.
Aug. 11 and 15, 2011	Large groups of USAID senior level visitors arrived in Dadaab, Kenya.
Aug. 17, 2011	Canada announced details about the funding allocations for the Horn of Africa.
Sept. 5, 2011	UN declared a famine in one additional region of Southern Somalia (Bay Region).
Oct–Nov 2011	Kenya and Ethiopia troops entered Somalia with hopes of helping AMISOM forces open up aid corridors and drive out Al Shabaab.
Feb. 3, 2012	The famine ended.

Appendix B – Food Security Map of the Horn of Africa – September 2011



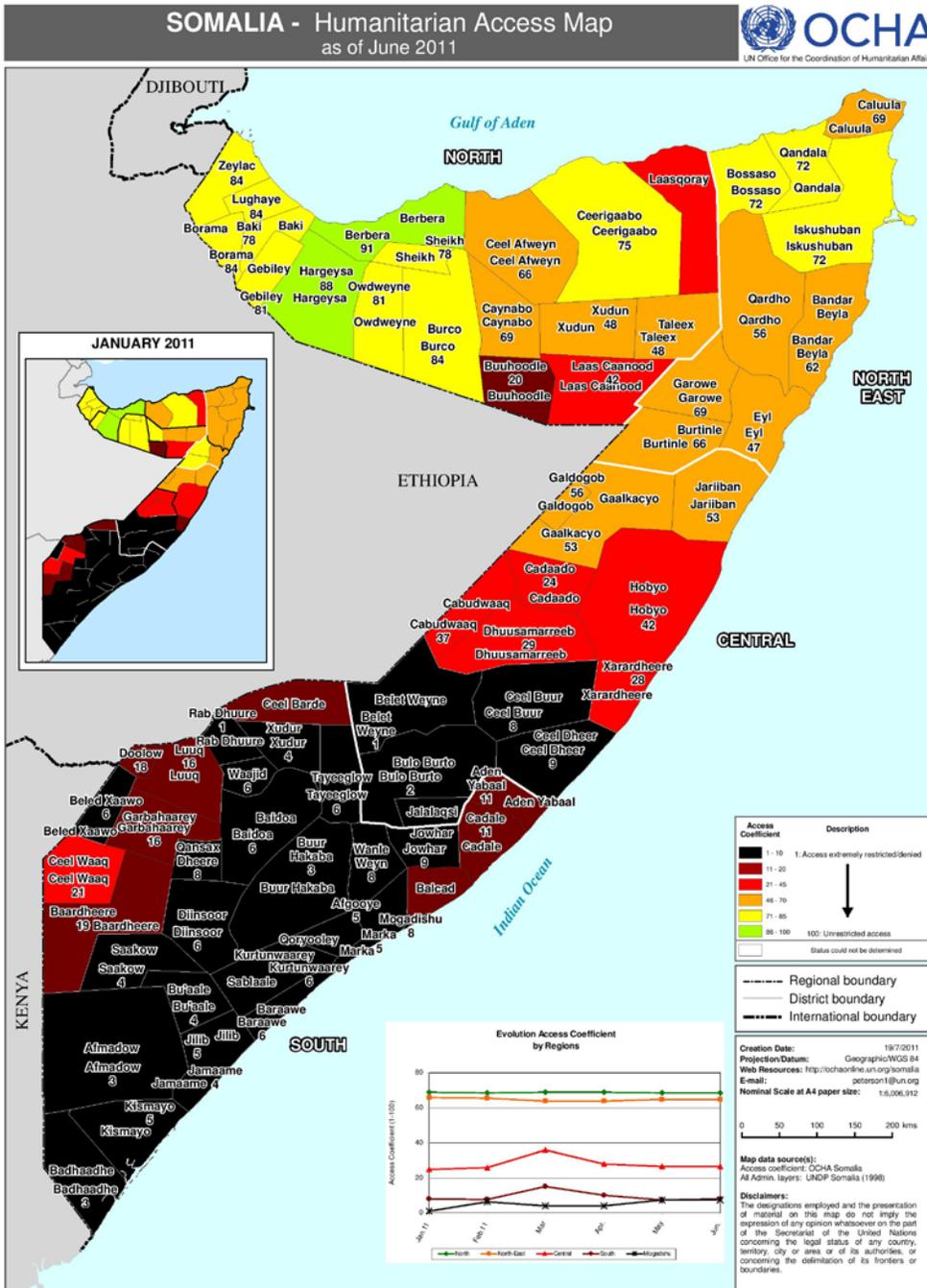
(Famine Early Warning System Network, September 2011)

Appendix C – Famine Map of Somalia – August 2011



(Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia, August 4, 2011)

Appendix D – Humanitarian Access Map of Somalia – June 2011



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(Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 2011)