

SOMALIA

Capital Mogadishu

Population 9.92 million

Literacy Rate 37.8 percent

Infant Mortality Rate 105.56/1,000 live births¹

Life Expectancy 50 years old²

Total Refugees 678,309

Total Asylum Seekers 309,794³

Refugees in South Africa 3,774⁴

Percent of People living under Poverty Line

GDP per Capita \$298⁵

HIV/AIDs Rate 0.7 percent⁶

Somalia has had no permanent government since 1991, though the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), centred in Mogadishu, is recognized as the ruling political entity. However, it is currently losing territory to opposition groups.⁷ As part of the provisions for the 2008 Djibouti agreement, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) withdrew from Somalia; consequently, other opposition groups, including al-Shabaan, a militant Islamist group, solidified their presence in Somalia. Al-Shabaab uses oppression and imposes harsh and intolerant measures upon the people in the territory it occupies.

Although the transitional government has improved its respect for human rights, human rights abuses are rampant. There is not widely recognized policing body and impunity for these abuses is widespread.⁸ Violence from opposition groups is ongoing. Human Rights Watch reports that opposition groups have openly attacked densely population civilian neighborhoods, turning civilians into mere pawns of the conflict.

A new report by the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau reported that piracy in Somalia is at a record high, with as many as 18 vessels hijacked and 344 crewmembers taken hostage since 1 January 2011. This poses a threat to Somalis whose livelihoods depend on fishing.⁹

¹ World Fact Book: Somalia, CIA. 2011.

² World Development Indicators: Somalia, World Bank. 2010.

³ 2010 Statistical Snapshot: Somalia, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2010. Data reflects total refugees and asylum seekers as of January 2010.

⁴ 2005 Statistical Yearbook: South Africa, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2007.

⁵ 2009 Indicators on Income and Economic Activity, United Nations Statistical Division. 2010. Data is based off internationally recognized poverty line of \$1.25 a day.

⁶ World Fact Book: Somalia, CIA. 2011.

⁷ World Report: Somalia, Human Rights Watch. 2011.

⁸ 2009 Human Rights Report: Somalia, U.S. Department of State. 2011.

⁹ "Report: Piracy at All Time High." CNN International. 14 April 2011. Web.