



Tackling the Proliferation of Illicit Weapons in Somalia

Contents

1	Executive Summary	4
2	Introduction	5
3	Proliferation of Illicit Weapons in Somalia	6
4	The Abudwak Incident	7
5	The Role of Ethiopia	9
6	Potential Implications of the Abudwak Incident	9
7	The Future of Arms Embargo	11
8	Conclusion	12
9	Recommendations	13

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1. Executive Summary

On 16 July 2024, armed local clans in the central Somali town of Abudwak overpowered government security forces and seized two truckloads of weapons being escorted by the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) from the Ethiopian border. This incident significantly heightened insecurity in Somalia, particularly in the state of Galmudug. The looted arms, estimated to be worth millions of dollars, were also a major embarrassment for the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), which had in December 2023 secured the lifting of a 30-year arms embargo. The inability of both Galmudug and the FGS to recover the weapons highlighted interconnected factors—weak government institutions, lack of capacity, and diversion—that collectively facilitate the easy flow of illicit trade including weapons. This failure also exacerbated protracted conflicts among clans in the Galmudug region and across the country, further eroding the fragile trust between communities and the government.

The surge in weapons smuggling comes at a time of ongoing clan conflicts in Galmudug, where clans have been feuding over land and resources. Additionally, there are concerns that the looted weapons, which were obtained by the Marehan clan, might motivate other clans in Galmudug to engage in an arms race to counter the Marehan, leading to an increased demand for illicit arms.

As some of the looted weapons are not commonly used by clans or found on the illicit market, their maintenance may prove difficult, possibly forcing communities to sell them. In this case, groups like al-Shabaab and Daesh, which rely on the black market, could acquire them, further strengthening their capabilities and endangering the recent gains made by the administration of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

Moreover, an election is scheduled in Galmudug in late 2025, raising concerns about the potential misuse of the smuggled weapons. There is a fear that political actors at the state or FGS level might use these arms to influence the balance of power among candidates. This election will include contests between the incumbent and challengers, as well as candidates supported by the FGS, which often seeks to install allies. This high-stakes election, coupled with the smuggling of illicit arms, could further destabilize the region and potentially turn Galmudug's eleven heavily armed clans against each other.

The Abudwak incident also reignited the debate over the complete lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia, as some federal MPs, as well as authorities in Puntland and Somaliland, have accused the FGS of negligence, complicity, or both. The ability of clan militias to capture large caches of arms raises questions about the effectiveness and consequences of the embargo lifting, potentially influencing future United Nations Security Council Assessments on weapons and ammunition management.

The policy brief covers the historical context of arms proliferation in Somalia and its underlying drivers. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the Abudwak incident and examines the involvement of regional countries, with a particular focus on Ethiopia.

Additionally, this paper investigates the ramifications of lifting the arms embargo and proposes several pragmatic recommendations, while highlighting the urgent necessity for the development of strategies aimed at retrieving looted weapons, as well as the need to enhance the legal and policy frameworks governing the management of weapons and ammunition.

2. Introduction

On 16 July 2024, members of the Marehan clan residing in and around the city of Abudwak in the Galgaduud region of Galmudug state ambushed two trucks transporting weapons and ammunition. The trucks had entered the country from the Ethiopian border, a primary corridor used by smugglers for decades to bring illicit items, including weapons and drugs, into Somalia.¹ The FGS, alongside Galmudug, condemned the looting and stated that the weapons had been purchased by businesspeople and intercepted by the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) at the border.² However, no further information was provided on the businesspeople, how the FGS became aware of the weapons, or whether any regional countries or international partners had tipped off the government.

The origin and quantity of the looted weapons remains unknown. However, it is believed they include a significant number of DShKs, PKMs, AK-47s, pistols, sniper rifles, and ammunition. What is certain, however, is that smuggling such a large quantity of weapons is unprecedented for the black market. This raises important questions about the ownership of the weapons, with speculation suggesting that they may belong to the government. If this is true, it underscores a lack of transparency and accountability in the government's weapons procurement processes.³

There is growing concern among political stakeholders in Galmudug that the looting of heavy weaponry by the Marehan clan could negatively impact the region's political stability by fueling existing clan conflicts. The incident also highlighted a larger problem of illicit weapons, driven by both internal and external factors, that requires immediate intervention from the government.

On July 18 following an emergency meeting to address the crisis, Somalia's National Security Council imposed a total ban on the illicit weapons trade and instructed the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to take legal action against those involved in the smuggling.⁴ However, as of the writing of this paper, no action has been taken against anyone. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a statement urging Ethiopia to cease interference in Somalia's internal affairs, accusing it of arming and equipping clan militias, an allegation which Ethiopia called defamation.⁵

1. Bahadur, Jay. "The price of civil war: A survey of Somalia's arms markets." GI-TOC–April (2022).

2. HIPS interview, 2024.

3. HIPS interview, 2024.

4. A press release from the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism on the 18th of July about the outcome of the emergency meeting session of the NSC.

5. VOA interview with the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia on 23rd of July <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB0WFGSi2H0>

The Abudwak incident occurred against the backdrop of several interrelated events: it took place after the lifting of a three-decade arms embargo amid offensive operations against Al-Shabaab—which heavily relies on the black market to acquire illicitly smuggled weapons to sustain its operations; and during a period of deteriorating relations between Somalia and Ethiopia following Ethiopia’s signing of a sea-recognition swapping memorandum of understanding with Somaliland, a breakaway region that has unilaterally claimed independence from Somalia since 1991. Together, these factors have sparked a debate about the future of the arms embargo, raising questions about whether Somalia was prepared for the embargo’s lifting and how such incidents might impact its future.

3. Proliferation of Illicit Weapons in Somalia

The proliferation of illicit weapons in Somalia has been happening since the 1980s as proxy wars with neighboring Ethiopia unfolded. Following the collapse of the central government and the ensuing civil war in 1991, there was no control over the arms flow in the country, turning Somalia into one of Africa’s most prominent arms trafficking hubs.⁶ The illicit arms market in the country is diverse, encompassing a wide range of weapons, from small arms and light weapons to assault rifles. Although Somalia has been gradually recovering from years of civil war, the central government is still far from establishing effective control of arms flowing through its land and maritime borders.

The enduring nature of this trade is fueled not only by high demand but also by the substantial profits it generates for smugglers. This has resulted in a self-sustaining system that has withstood years of arms embargoes designed to curb it. Recent incidents have underscored the scale of the problem: in December 2022, the US Navy intercepted a vessel in the Gulf of Oman carrying 50 tons of ammunition that was being operated by Somali individuals.⁷ In May 2023, the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) seized military equipment at the port of Mogadishu, which the Somali government claimed was intended for al-Shabaab.⁸

The drivers of illicit weapons proliferation in Somalia can be categorized into two types: internal and external drivers. Internal drivers mainly relate to the capabilities of the FGS or Federal Member States (FMS) to effectively manage their weapons and ammunition or address the illicit weapons issue collectively. Key internal drivers include the lack of a sufficient legal and policy framework, inadequate implementation of existing frameworks, depot leakages and occasional diversions, and, most notably, al-Shabaab’s frequent raids on Somali Security Forces (SSF) or ATMIS frontline bases, where they overrun and loot weapons and ammunition stored in forward operating bases (FOBs).

6. Chiara Gentili, 2024 “Countering the arms race in Somalia.” <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-somalia-ocindex/>

7. Final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, 2023.

8. Sonna, 2023, <https://sonna.so/en/nisa-thwarts-al-shabaabs-attempt-to-receive-military-equipment/>

This has occurred many times throughout Al-Shabaab's existence in Somalia. For example, in 2018 and 2019 al-Shabaab attacked two Somali security force bases, looting military equipment including vehicles, anti-aircraft guns, and large amounts of ammunition.⁹ More recently, in 2023, al-Shabaab attacked an African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS)— base, killing approximately 54 Ugandan soldiers and looting the base, though it was unclear what was taken. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni described it as one of the worst attacks by al-Shabaab.¹⁰

The repeated attacks on both the Somali Security Forces and ATMIS – set to transition to the African Union Stabilization Mission by January 2025—demonstrated that raiding bases has become al-Shabaab's primary and most effective strategy for replenishing its arsenal and sustaining its operations.

External drivers include the ongoing political instability in Yemen, which is the primary source of most illicit weapons entering Somalia. For instance, the Panel of Experts on Somalia investigated three cases of illicit weapons shipments intercepted by international naval forces and carried by unflagged ships. Although the destinations of these shipments were unclear, the seized cargo included a variety of weapons such as rifles, heavy machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.¹¹

Additionally, regional politics, particularly Somalia's relationship with Ethiopia, play an important role in the flow of illicit weapons. A notable example is the surge in illegal weapons entering Somalia following the deterioration of Somalia-Ethiopia relations in the aftermath of Ethiopia's Memorandum of Understanding with breakaway Somaliland in January 2024. The agreement grants Ethiopia a naval base along the Red Sea in exchange for recognizing Somaliland as an independent state.¹²

All these factors – coupled with weak border security, significant numbers of weapons in the hands of civilians, and the limited internal capacity of the government at both federal and state levels –highlights the complexity of the illicit weapons flow issue and underscores the need for a collective approach to address it. The federal government must lead the way by enacting all necessary policies essential for curbing the illegal flow of weapons.

4. The Abudwak Incident

On July 15, a clan militia attacked a truck loaded with weapons and ammunition crossing from Ethiopia, escorted by NISA security personnel, and seized its contents, resulting in 12 casualties, including two NISA soldiers.¹³

9. United Nations, Security Council (note 89), S/2019/858, para. 119.

10. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20230604-more-than-50-ugandan-peacekeepers-killed-in-al-shabaab-attack-in-somalia-president-says>

11. United Nations, Security Council (note 88), S/2017/924, paras 108–17.

12. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia-somaliland/stakes-ethiopia-somaliland-deal>

13. HIPS interview, 2024.

The FGS and Galmudug both released what appeared to be coordinated statements, labeling the weapons as illegally smuggled and vowing to bring those responsible to justice. Different explanations about the origin and ownership of the seized weapons, as well as the reasons for their purchase and the motivations behind their seizure have emerged. One prominent hypothesis is that the FGS clandestinely procured the weapons through intermediaries to give to the Macawisley clan militias fighting al-Shabaab militants. These militias have assisted the Somali National Armed Forces in liberating districts and villages in the region such as Ceeldheere and Galcad.¹⁴

There is also speculation that some senior Galmudug officials tipped off the militia that pillaged the shipment, allegedly due to the involvement of businessmen and politicians from the Galmudug state who facilitated or purchased the weapons and are expected to run in the upcoming, delayed elections in Galmudug. Other rumors have also been rife that Galmudug leaders feared that these weapons might be used against them in the event of election-related conflicts between the Galmudug leaders and the FGS.¹⁵

The incident has generated fierce debate among FGS politicians. Some parliamentarians have commended the actions of the Marehan clan militia.¹⁶ Others have expressed concerns about the potential repercussions for both Galmudug and the FGS, saying the looting of weapons may exacerbate the worsening security situation in the state.

As to why the Marehan clan militia seized the weapons, some analysts and politicians point to the arming of the Macawisley by the FGS in its anti-terror offensive in Galmudug and Hirshabelle in 2023. That created a clan power imbalance and increased apprehension as most of Galmudug's 11 clans have adversarial relations, if not outright conflicts.

There is a prevailing perception among some members of the Marehan clan that their community has been inadequately represented within the Somali National Army and the Galmudug Darwiish forces. There is also said to be dissatisfaction among the Marehan that the FGS has not provided them with weaponry comparable to that allocated to other clans in the region. Members of the Marehan community insist that the stolen weapons were intended for the Sacad sub-clan of the Habargidir with whom the Marehan sub-clan of Wagardhac has had a protracted conflict.¹⁷ The Sacad are currently in conflict with the Leelkase clan in the Mudug region, a sub-clan of the larger Darod lineage, which also includes the Marehan.¹⁸

The Abudwak incident revealed two significant issues. First, it exposed the weaknesses of both Galmudug and the FGS in relation to clan power, as militias looted caches of weapons in broad daylight.

14. HIPS interview, 2024.

15. HIPS interview, 2024.

16. HIPS interview, 2024.

17. HIPS interview, 2024.

18. HIPS interview, 2024.

Second, the unforeseen consequences of arming clan militias in the FGS's fight against al-Shabaab has had a negative impact, sparking an arms race among clans.

5. The Role of Ethiopia

Ethiopia has played a critical role in shaping Somalia's internal politics for many years, providing both political and military support to factions within the country that align with its interests. Historically, Ethiopia armed and hosted clan rebels who eventually ousted the military regime of Siad Barre. Additionally, in 2006, Ethiopia invaded Somalia to assist the Transitional Federal Government in defeating the Islamic Courts Union. Since then, Ethiopia has maintained an active role in Somalia's internal politics.¹⁹

However, Ethiopia adopted a policy of non-interference when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power and began working directly with the federal government during Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo's administration. This approach appears to have shifted after Ethiopia signed an MOU granting it sovereign access to the Red Sea, following months of Prime Minister Abiy's vocal pursuit for Ethiopia to secure access to the sea.²⁰

An excellent example is the looted weapons that entered Somalia from Ethiopia, as well as the recent consignment of weapons provided by Ethiopia to Puntland.²¹ This suggests that Ethiopia has returned to a hardline policy toward Somalia, aiming to fuel internal conflict—particularly clan conflicts—by arming federal member states opposed to the current administration of Hassan Sheikh and specific clans. Such a policy may destabilize Somalia and also contribute to the instability of an already tumultuous region. This interference could also benefit terrorist groups like al-Shabaab and Daesh by providing them with an opportunity to recruit more fighters.

6. Potential Implications of the Abudwak Incident

The seizure of a substantial arsenal by a clan in a region with ongoing inter-clan conflicts could have both internal and broader regional implications.

First, the acquisition of such an arsenal could exacerbate existing clan conflicts as various Marehan sub-clans have fought against each other and against almost all clans in Galmudug.

19. Mesfin, Berouk. "Ethiopia's role and foreign policy in the Horn of Africa." *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (2012): 87-113.

20. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-67858566>

21. <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-accuses-ethiopia-of-shipping-illegal-arms-to-semi-autonomous-region-/7792758.html>

Second, one clan getting millions of dollars in free (looted) arms shipments affects the balance of power among the clans in the region, and this could increase the proliferation of illicit arms throughout the country, particularly in Galmudug. This may prompt other clans in the region, such as the Saleebaan, Sacad, Dir, and Ceyr—who have had a long-standing conflict with the Marehan—to seek additional weaponry by engaging in an arms race to counterbalance the Marehan.

It may also encourage clans across the country to loot any weapons they encounter, regardless of ownership. For instance, in September 2024, clans in the Mudug region attempted to seize trucks transporting weapons for Puntland, but Puntland successfully escorted the trucks to Garowe. Regrettably, such a situation could make future clan conflicts inevitable and deadly unless both the FGS and FMS, especially Galmudug, implement preventative solutions.²²

Third, there is a significant risk that the weapons might enter the black market. Despite a speculated gentleman's agreement within the Marehan clan not to sell heavy weaponry as they have running hostilities with at least five other sub-clans and clans in the region, it is unlikely that such an agreement will stand considering that the number of weapons is massive, and that they were looted by diverse groups that may include criminals. Reports indicate that some small arms and light weapons such as AK-47s and pistols are already being sold in the market.²³ This suggests that these weapons could eventually and easily end up in the hands of dangerous groups such as al-Shabaab, which relies heavily on the black market to arm its forces.

The fact that the Marehan in the Galgadud region are overwhelmingly adherents of Sufi orders which staunchly reject Al-Shabaab's ideology is likely to discourage them from selling weapons directly to al-Shabaab. However, al-Shabaab might purchase them through middlemen.

Fourth, given the internal political instability the country has faced in recent years, there is concern that the weapons could cross borders and re-enter Ethiopia. If some end up in regions such as Amhara and Oromo it could exacerbate both the armed uprisings against the government and inter-ethnic conflicts across Ethiopia.

Adding to the complexity is the fact that the incident occurred amid a diplomatic breakdown between Somalia and Ethiopia following Ethiopia's signing of the MoU with Somaliland.²⁴ Mogadishu views the MoU as Addis Ababa's attempt to destabilize Somalia.²⁵ This would not only serve as a propaganda opportunity for groups like al-Shabaab but also risks further destabilizing the region.

22. HIPS interview with an academic.

23. HIPS interview with the former mayor of Abudwak.

24. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2024 "Ethiopia's MoU with Somaliland: A threat to Somalia's Sovereignty and Regional Stability" <https://heritageinstitute.org/ethiopias-mou-with-somaliland-a-threat-to-somalias-sovereignty-and-regional-stability/>

25. A leaked letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, dated July 22nd, was sent to its diplomatic corps worldwide.

7. The Future of the Arms Embargo

In 1992, following the collapse of the military regime and the onset of civil war, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) imposed a complete arms embargo on Somalia to curb the influx of weapons that could fuel the conflict and to provide a window for addressing the humanitarian crisis and widespread displacement.²⁶ In 2013, the arms embargo was partially lifted, requiring the government to report its import consignments as an accountability measure.²⁷ Since then, successive Somali governments have consistently advocated for the complete lifting of the embargo, arguing that it is essential for defeating al-Shabaab and ensuring the security and stability of the nation.

In 2021, following extensive negotiations, the UNSC agreed to dispatch a technical team from the Secretary General's Office to assess Somalia's capacity to manage weapons and ammunition.²⁸ The primary objective was to provide recommendations that would guide the UNSC in its review of the arms embargo. In July 2022, the technical team visited Mogadishu and Baidoa and produced a comprehensive report outlining 10 benchmarks for the complete lifting of the embargo.²⁹ This report, shared with the Security Council, marked a significant milestone, as it provided the FGS with clear criteria for removing the embargo for the first time since it was imposed.

Another technical team was deployed in 2023 to assess the progress made by the Somali government against the benchmarks. The team produced another comprehensive report detailing the progress and identifying areas for improvement.³⁰ Although the report did not conclusively determine whether Somalia was ready for the complete lifting of the arms embargo, it provided the government with persuasive evidence for their lobbying efforts to remove it entirely. As a result, in December 2023, the UNSC adopted two resolutions: one lifting the arms embargo on the FGS³¹ and another imposing an embargo on al-Shabaab and other non-state actors.

The FGS was granted a total lift of the arms embargo and is only required to submit two reports (a mid-term and a final report) to inform the council of its recent purchase or donation of weapons and ammunition. However, the FMS are required to follow notification procedures through the FGS if they intend to purchase or receive donated weaponry and ammunition.³² This structure has been put in place to give the FGS complete control over all weaponry entering the country, ensuring effective management of weapons and ammunition. Meanwhile, a complete embargo is being imposed on al-Shabaab and other actors destabilizing the peace and security of Somalia³³.

26. Resolution 733 –paragraph 5, adopted on 23 January 1992.

27. Resolution 2093 – paragraphs 33&34, adopted on 6 March 2013

28. Resolution 2607 – paragraph 42, adopted on 15 November 2021.

29. A letter dated 15 September 2022 from the Secretary-General Office to the President of the Security Council contained the outcome of his team's assessment. Available publicly.

30. A letter dated 15 September 2023 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council containing the outcome of their assessment of the benchmarks set for the total lifting of the arms embargo. Available publicly.

31. Resolution 2714, adopted 1 December 2023.

32. Resolution 2713–paragraphs 36, 37,38, 39, adopted on 1 December 2023.

33. Ibid.

However, the recent incident in Abudwak has reignited the debate over whether the UNSC's decision to lift the arms embargo was appropriate. Both Somaliland and Puntland, which had opposed the lifting, were quick to highlight the decision's repercussions³⁴. Additionally, Puntland, which has been at odds with the current administration since its inception, has requested that the UNSC reconsider its decision.³⁵

The Abudwak incident is unlikely to lead the UNSC to take drastic action such as reinstating the arms embargo. However, these events are unfolding alongside upcoming technical assessments, which aim to evaluate the government's progress against the benchmarks established in 2022. The UNSC has also requested the extension of the assessment this time to all FMS where practical. Nevertheless, the report released on October 15 failed to address either the Abudwak incident or the broader issue of illicit weapons trafficking.³⁶

On the contrary, the final report of the Panel of Experts, mandated by UNSC Resolution 2713 on Somalia and released in October this year, extensively discussed both the Abudwak incident and the broader challenge of illicit weapons trafficking. According to the report, the Abudwak incident represented the most significant case of weapons diversion documented since the lifting of the arms embargo in December 2023. While the report noted that an investigation regarding the origin and the intended user(s) of the looted weapons is still ongoing, it underlined that there are serious issues related to “the irregular procurement of weapons and ammunition that falls outside national weapons and ammunition management frameworks.”³⁷ In other words, there is a persistent and thriving market for illicit arms trade in Somalia despite the milestone achievement of having the longstanding arms embargo lifted.

8. Conclusion

The proliferation of illicit weapons remains a critical challenge to Somalia's stability, as demonstrated by the recent Abudwak incident and the recent provision of weapons to Puntland by Ethiopia. These events underscore the complexities surrounding arms control, including weak border security, clan conflicts, and external influences, all of which exacerbate the threat posed by uncontrolled weapons flows. There is a need for the Somali government, including the FMS, to collaboratively develop legal and policy frameworks to combat the illicit weapons trade and address its broader implications.

34. A press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Somaliland on 16 July 2024. An interview with the current Minister of Interior of Puntland, Abdi Farah Said, gave to Bloomberg on 18 July 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-07-18/somalia-region-wants-un-to-reinstate-a-31-year-old-arms-embargo>

35. Ibid, interview with the Minister of Interior.

36. Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4063929?ln=ar&v=pdf>

37. Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, p. 26. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/268/38/pdf/n2426838.pdf>

9. Recommendations

On the Looted Weapons:

- The FGS should address this issue with caution, as any forceful attempts to retrieve weapons from clan militias or the public could escalate into further conflict. Maintaining trust between the government—particularly its security institutions—and the local community is crucial for ensuring stability in the region and advancing the gains achieved against al-Shabaab during the first phase of the offensives.
- The FGS and Galmudug should consider integrating the clan militia that seized the weapons into either Sector 21 of the Somali National Armed Forces or the Galmudug Darwiish forces. This integration would help ensure that the looted weapons are under the control of either the FGS or Galmudug, thereby reducing the risk of their use in clan conflicts.
- The FGS should enlist the assistance of Marehan clan elders, including the Ugaas, to facilitate negotiations regarding the sale of these weapons back to the government. The priority should be on heavy weapons, such as the DShK, and those that the militia may not know how to use such as sniper rifles. This approach would not only enable the government to recover some of the weapons but also help prevent them from falling into the hands of extremist groups like al-Shabaab.

On the Proliferation of Illicit Weapons:

- The FGS should adopt aggressive measures to combat the proliferation of illicit weapons by shutting down black markets that facilitate their distribution. This should be achieved by enhancing existing legal frameworks through the enactment of the firearms bill, which has been pending since last year. The bill must establish comprehensive regulations governing the possession, purchase, sale, and use of firearms within the country, enabling the government to effectively manage weapons owned by clans and other actors through a robust registration and tracking system.
- The government needs to enhance transparency and accountability in its defense spending and arms procurement processes. The National Security Council's directive to present the procurement policy for weapons and ammunition of the Somali Security Forces to the Council of Ministers signifies progress. However, effective implementation is crucial to prevent diversion and mismanagement.

- Given the widespread nature of weapons in civilian hands, the government needs to develop a detailed, context-specific disarmament and demobilization strategy aimed at retrieving weapons in the hands of clans and civilians. This should be a gradual and long-term effort, recognizing that it may require significant time and resources.
- The FGS should develop a context-specific and practical strategy to strengthen border security by closely coordinating with the FMS to avoid political disagreements and address capability gaps, including manpower. The reinstatement and resourcing of Regional Security Offices (RSOs) are essential to ensure effective collaboration and implementation of these efforts.
- The Ministries of the Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation of both the FGS and Galmudug should prioritize reconciliation in the Galgaduud region and seek to broker a lasting peace. The Galkaio Peace Agreement, which resolved the protracted conflict between the two clans in the city, could serve as a foundational framework for these efforts.
- Regional and international cooperation is crucial for effectively addressing the proliferation of illicit weapons. The FGS should leverage existing regional coordination mechanisms, such as the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), to enhance regional cooperation in combating illicit weapons smuggling, which significantly contributes to the destabilization of the region.
- Finally, the international community should support both FGS and FMS institutions that are responsible for managing weapons and ammunition. This support should include providing technical expertise to advance legal and regulatory frameworks for regulating both privately owned, legally imported, and illicit weapons, as well as enhancing their capacity to secure Somalia's coastal waters.

HERITAGE

I N S T I T U T E