Beyond isbaaro: Reclaiming Somalia's haunted roads

An applied research study to map the political economy of roadblocks in South Central Somalia and assess ways to intervene to promote transformative change

Transparency Solutions

Contents

"Transparency Solutions is to be congratulated on producing an outstanding piece of social research on a significant issue. Through extensive, original and indeed brave empirical research, this report shows that the isbaaro are damaging the political economy of South Central Somalia to an extent that has never been understood or demonstrated before. In addition, they set out ideas that can form the basis of further work on how the process might be promoted of transforming the isbaaro into a force for good for the Somali people."

Professor Eric Herring (Research Director, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol; Co-Director, Somali First: Promoting Somali-led Development)

Acknowledgements

Summary

> "This is a haunted road. All the passengers on our bus were robbed and some of the women raped. They kept us there for six hours. We were terrified. I hate those roadblocks."
> Clan Elder, Hiran

Armed conflict in Somalia has disrupted the lives of Somali people for over two decades. While the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) are gaining territorial control, armed groups are able to exploit the vacuum of authority created by two decades of conflict through their own roadblocks. This summary report, aimed at the international donor community, addresses a significant literature gap. It maps existing roadblocks on the road between Beletweyne and Mogadishu and uncovers key information to understanding the ways in which roadblocks cause harm. It calls for collaborative action to reclaim Somalia's roads.

Key findings:

Roadblocks are restricting the ability of people, goods and aid to move safely and freely by road, and are impeding progress towards the long-term stability and reconstruction of Somalia. The current political economy of roadblocks is a complex one with competing and conflicting interests, power struggles, corruption and crime all converging within a challenging and hostile physical environment. The issues Somalia's political economy presents are damaging and need to be addressed urgently to counter several serious implications for the country's stability and for the wider state-building process.

All three political power networks in Somalia use roadblocks for purposes of territorial control and revenue generation. The State, Al-Shabaab (AS) and clan-militia groups, to varying degrees, place personal or political interests over national interests. This significantly hampers security and development, and if unchecked will adversely affect the progress of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and its federated regions towards achieving a stable and accountable national government based on genuine reconciliation.

Roadblocks foster a culture of corruption across all three power networks. This includes those under state control where there is evidence to suggest that poor resourcing and lack of capacity exacerbates corruption. Regional and local authorities, for example, are increasingly financially dependent on the revenue roadblocks generate but, with an absence of any fiscal or management systems, a small number of powerful individuals control this revenue.

Money is found to be a stronger driver for those operating roadblocks than security. On this one route alone, it is estimated that state-run roadblocks generate an annual revenue of more than $10m and that Al-Shabaab are likely to be taking $3m each year from people passing through roadblocks under their control.

Roadblocks contribute to insecurity. Road users are subjected to crimes and human rights abuses which regularly take place at roadblocks, ranging from low-level harassment, through intimidation and threats, to extreme violence including rape and killings. Significantly, majority of these occur at non-state controlled roadblocks. Experience and/or fear of crime and human rights abuses severely restricts freedom of movement in respect of people, trade and humanitarian aid.

Some evidence suggests roadblocks are becoming safer under state control. Most recent serious crimes, as recorded from the interviews from this study, are largely attributable to clan- militia run roadblocks.

Al-Shabaab roadblocks are well organised and comparatively safe. For those who feel able to pass through AS-controlled territories passing through Al-Shabaab roadblocks is their preferred route because it is efficient, quicker and, once initial screenings have been completed, is relatively safe.

Roadblocks are often the site of armed conflicts. The FGS, with the support of its allies, is continuing to gain ground in securing roadblocks. However, there remains a substantial number of roadblocks in the hands of Al-Shabaab and clan-militia groups. They are often the centre of conflict where bloody armed clashes between these competing power networks are fought out.

A brokering business of roadblocks has developed with road-users reliant on 'maqalas' (brokers) who act as intermediaries between each of the power groups to facilitate safe passage for a price.

Roadblocks contribute to a widening social inequality. Many road-users are excluded from travelling through Al-Shabaab or clan-militia roadblocks because of their personal profiles, due to the jobs they do, or because of past trauma. Those who can afford to do so, choose to fly. Consequently, for the most part only the poorest and often the most vulnerable in society undertake long distance travel by road and only then, when necessary.

Road infrastructure is almost non-existent and is severely hampering economic development. Roads, as they exist in Somalia, are mostly tracks, littered with potholes even where they were once tarmac. When combined with a hostile terrain and a propensity for natural disasters, (most commonly drought and flooding), as well as additional problems of roadblocks, road journeys become a perilous undertaking.

A significant lack of quantitative data relating to road use severely limits the ability of future policy and programme development to improve the situation.

Roadblocks have a disproportionately negative effect on society, particularly people's daily life. Many are excluded from travelling, because of their clan affiliations or because they are a potential target for Al-Shabaab. Everyone, whether they use the road or not, bear the cost of higher prices for goods and services because of the high costs of transportation.

Roadblocks in Somaliland have made the successful transition to safe and functioning security control posts. Similarly, FGS efforts under the leadership of President Hassan have liberated many districts in Mogadishu from the violence and corruption of roadblocks, transforming them into more effective control posts with an emphasis on security. In both cases, this was because of a conscious process to stabilise the districts through locally-led law and order initiatives which could be applied elsewhere. Clan leaders were also instrumental in achieving change.

Unemployment is one of the main drivers of illegal roadblocks. This is undoubtedly the case with clan-militia, many of whom are desperate young men with families to feed, no skills and no visible opportunities. Al-Shabaab continue to exploit these young men who are more susceptible to radicalisation and recruitment.

There is significant public support for the FGS to legitimise roadblocks and to run them efficiently and effectively. The overwhelming majority of respondents were certain in their view that roadblocks should be the responsibility of the state but equally there was recognition that this was not yet the case. There was also doubt around the ability of the state to achieve full and effective control. There is a groundswell of support for the FGS to introduce a new era of safe, affordable and accountable roadblocks as part of the transition to stability.

Introduction

Armed conflict has wrecked Somalia during the past two decades. The people of Somalia bear the brunt of hardship due to conflict between local militias, the Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) forces, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and Al-Shabaab. Despite FGS' progress in establishing a Provisional Constitution, the government does not yet control many geographic areas. Consequently, armed groups are able to exploit this for their own gain through roadblocks. However, there is a significant gap in literature and research on roadblocks, especially in the Somali context.

This report summarises the findings of an applied research study to assess the political economy of roadblocks in South Central Somalia. The study mapped the existing roadblocks on the 338km stretch of road between Beletweyne in Hiran region and the capital, Mogadishu (26 of which are available in Appendix A). This research uncovered key information to understand the ways in which roadblocks cause harm to communities, including: through violence, slowing or diverting goods and humanitarian aid, and inviting corrupt activities. These insights on localised systems will inform locally-led interventions to reclaim Somalia's haunted roads. Stakeholders and policymakers can start to make smart interventions to improve conditions along the highway and in time, secondary routes. Better routes can build linkages and stability across Somalia, laying a foundation to strengthen society and build peace.

The report draws on 87 interviews with representative samples of the key stakeholder groups including road users, roadblock operators, communities who live along the route, state officials, brokers, transport companies and security personnel between October 2015 and April 2016.

Explanatory notes

- The Somali word 'isbaaro' is used to describe illegitimate roadblocks; 'control posts' in its English form has been annexed into the Somali language and is used here to describe roadblocks under state control. The term 'roadblocks' is used when describing roadblocks collectively.

- All sums of money are given in USD. Where the data gathered was in Somali Shillings, an exchange conversion rate of 22,000 So.Sh. to $I USD has been applied.

- It was not possible to interview Al-Shabaab militia due to security constraints, but six researchers passed through Al-Shabaab isbaaro on several different occasions and their observations were included.

- Locating an existing accurate map which depicts all the towns and villages was challenging. Village names, like other Somali names, use a myriad of spellings and some villages do not even exist on the maps. The names used here are the final version settled upon.

Mapping the roadblocks

Physically mapping the roadblocks has been a key part of this study. From the data gathered, 26 checkpoints have been identified to more closely examine the political economy.

There is no one definitive route, but the route of the north-south trunk road appears on most detailed maps of the region. This is also commonly known as the eastern route and, prior to the civil war, was the main route between Beletweyne and Mogadishu and an important trade route. Today the section between Beletweyne and Mahady Bridge is hardly used because of several years under Al-Shabaab control, and more recently heavy fighting as the FGS/AMISOM struggle to regain control.

Most vehicles taking the trunk road from Mogadishu follow the trunk road only as far as Mahady Bridge before turning west and then following the western route, which is both shorter in length and time. Very few go further north, past Jalaqsi before turning west. Those who do brave the whole trunk route are faced with a road which is now little more than a sandy track, ravaged by pot-holes. During the rainy season, heavy rains and flooding often make it impassable. The trunk road can take up to four days to complete as opposed to 24-36 hours on the western route, depending on the type of vehicle, the number of rest stops and the actual route.

Those travelling the western route in its entirety, follow the west road out of Beletweyne to Luqjeelow and then through Al-Shabaab-controlled villages as far as Darusaalem on secondary and feeder roads which are extremely rough tracks connecting small villages in existence only because of vehicles traversing them for the past twenty years or more. Beyond Darusaalem is a small village called Jarriirow, after which there is a particularly dangerous stretch of land where clan-militia operate until one reaches Afgoye. At this point the roads become more recognisable and are under state control. Taking the Afgoye route is the shortest route and takes approximately 24-36 hours, depending on the season and conditions. It is also the most dangerous of the western route options.

Below is a map which shows the N-S trunk road (Fig. 1). The roadblocks between Mogadishu and Mahady Bridge just north of Jowhar are situated on this road. The second map shows the roadblocks between Mahady Bridge and Beletweyne (Fig. 2). See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the roadblocks, their location and control.

Figure 1: N-S trunk Road between Mogadishu and Beletweyne

Figure 2: Location of Roadblocks between Beletweyne and Mahady Weyne
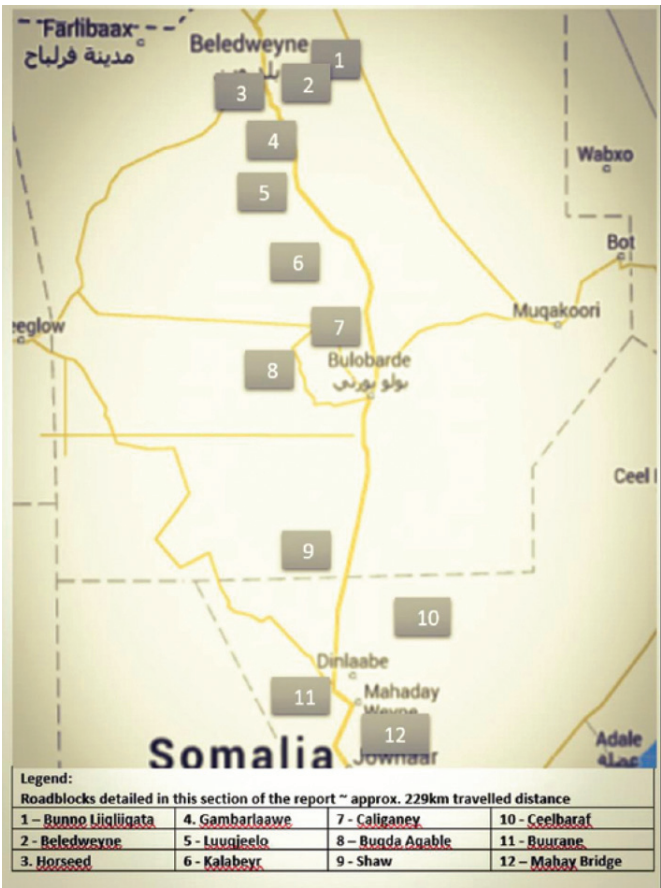
The local context

The Hiran and Middle Shabelle region, even within a South-Central Somalia context, experience a multitude of man-made and natural disasters which affect security.

The River Shabelle flows through the south-western part of Middle Shabelle from the Hiran region. It is the lifeline for agriculture, but it also brings devastation during flooding seasons or catastrophic drought at other times.

In the first three months of 2016, the Shabelle River was at its lowest level since 1963 (FAO SWALIM 2016). Persistent conflicts and seasonal floods, coupled with massive displacements caused by ongoing military operations and inter-clan fighting means that most of the communities' coping mechanisms have been exhausted. This has not only reduced the ability of its populace to engage in productive work, but has also often deprived them of their livelihoods.

With 65% of the workforce in Somalia employed in agriculture, and livestock contributing almost 40% to GDP and accounting for more than 50% of exports, the effects of frequent natural disasters can cause severe humanitarian crises. In addition, conflict-related deaths and injuries, population displacement, trade disruptions, the Al-Shabaab ban on some humanitarian agencies and relocations have all had a negative impact on food availability.

> **"We transport aid for humanitarian agencies. In 2014 there were two separate incidents when aid was diverted at a roadblock. In the end, we paid a ransom in order not to damage the reputation of our company"**
> A.G, Transport Company Manager, Mogadishu

There is also a very real external environmental threat as neighbouring Ethiopia forges ahead with its construction of major hydroelectric energy and water irrigation projects in the Wabi-Shabelle and Genale-Dawa river basins. The environmental impact of these large-scale projects is predicted to have far-reaching and grave consequences. Chandler (2015) states it would create the 'perfect condition for the further deterioration of the situation in Somalia' (See also Mohamed, 2013). These vast central regions of Somalia may become entirely transformed into rain-fed agriculture which will deepen the crisis when the rains fail.

The road infrastructure

> **"Roadblocks make it difficult to move goods and aid, let alone attract significant investment to the regions"**
> (name withheld)

Road reconstruction is an important component in the overall political economy of roadblocks. Understanding the wider context is important to explaining why the western route, which is unpaved, un-adopted and largely unmapped, has gained popularity over the main route, it is important to know the wider context.

Table 1: Road network by administrative classification and surface type (**Source:** Directorate of Highways, Ministry of Public Works and Housing (1989)

Type of road	Primary (Km)	Secondary (Km)	Rural/Feeder Roads (Km)	All (Km)	Percentage (%) share of roads in Somalia
Paved	2,339	418	- - - - -	2,757	12.6
Gravel	- - - - -	844	- - - -	844	3.9
Earth	220	3,588	14,421	18,229	83.5
Total	2,559	4,850	14,421	21830	100

As the last verifiable data shows, even in 1989 the road network was barely adequate to meet the transport needs of the economy (table 1). Today in South Central Somalia, approximately 600 km of roads are still paved to some extent. This includes the north-south trunk road out of Mogadishu between Beletweyne and Mahady-weyne (120km north of Mogadishu), where tarmac still exists in various states of disrepair. However, the roads in the Shabelle River valleys, where soil conditions are difficult, are generally in a very poor condition.

A compelling case for investing in road infrastructure in Somalia was incorporated into The New Deal Compact under priority strategy 4 (FGS, 2013a):

"Priority 1: Enhance the productivity of high priority sectors and related value chains, including through the rehabilitation and expansion of critical infrastructure for transport, market access, trade, and energy."

This is further developed in 'The Economic Recovery Plan 2014-15', which includes "transportation (roads, airports, ports) under "Rapid rehabilitation of Infrastructure" (FGS, 2013b). The planned, costed activity within the 2016 financial year was for the emergency rehabilitation of ports and jetties.

There have been two recent studies into road reconstruction in Somalia and coincidentally, both focussed on the N-S trunk road. In 2006, a joint assessment between the UN and the World Bank costed the rehabilitation of the road from Mogadishu as far as Jowhar in some detail, putting the figure at $60m. A major Somali company with a strong track record in infrastructure development (name withheld) shared findings of an initial scoping exercise into the feasibility of building a toll road between Mogadishu and Beletweyne which concluded:

"Based on the limited primary field information gathered, the reconstruction of the North-South trunk road sections from the Mogadishu to Beletweyne road is likely to have the biggest impact in improving the lives of the people in these regions. From a very limited field condition survey and interviews with Zonal coordinators, specifically, the portion of the North-South trunk road between Mogadishu and Beletweyne (about 322 km) was determined to be beyond repair and will probably need to be reconstructed along with the rehabilitation of important secondary roads."

In 2013, AMISOM were involved in a 4.2 kilometre roadbuilding initiative in the Lower Shabelle. The techniques involved consisted of levelling and compacting local top soils and aggregate. Such a road, with no chemical bonding would have a limited life once exposed to the local climate (heat, rain and flash flooding) and to the wear and tear from trucks.

More recent developments in road making technology (RMT) in dry regions means there are several RMT systems on the market today which use existing soil/sand materials which are then mixed with a stabilisation chemical. According to the manufacturers, using such methods can result in 1km of road being made, with some ease, per day. Local people can be trained to operate the machines (bull-dozers, roller etc.) and taught how to mix the different chemical compounds. Such methods are quicker to complete and considerably cheaper per kilometre than orthodox road-making. They can potentially provide a more appropriate alternative to conventional road creation with its use of often unstable and expensive aggregates, and asphalt/concrete surfacing.

The need for good roads is fundamental not only for Somalia, but for the entire Horn of Africa, and can play an important role in fostering reconciliation, mitigating conflict and deepening peace. Transport infrastructure can also greatly contribute towards state-building by providing a very visible and positive link between the state and the provision of a common good for the benefit of the Somali people. More people and transport networks using the roads (and ports) will lead to increased tax revenues, enabling the government and local administrations to better respond to the needs of the Somali people. A rigorous needs assessment and a robust feasibility study would be need to be carried out, but getting buy-in from local communities and those with local vested interests will be vital to making a significant change.

The three power networks

Clan-militia

Clan and sub-clan structures are still central to the identity of many Somalis and clan rivalries continue to dominate the balance of power across Somalia for those who seek to exploit tribalism for political gain. Maintaining control of a territory is still seen as essential by some clan-militia, but this study found that the money generated from isbaaro is the stronger driver. At the time of this research, only two permanent isbaaro were under the control of clan-militia: Clegane, run by the Xawaadle clan and Afar Afarta between Darusaalem and Afgoye, run by Abgaal clan. All other clan-militia isbaaro in this region could more accurately be described as opportunistic, mobile or sites of ambush.

Typically, militia groups will hide in the bush or the forests and will drive a vehicle of up to six armed men, often in military uniform, into the path of an oncoming passenger bus or truck to hold it up, seizing possessions, money and goods. These are violent acts carried out in a state of heightened tension and in an extremely hostile environment. Those who are being held up are terrified. The militia, often very young men, with high adrenalin levels are determined to maximise the opportunity at all costs. It is easy to see how negotiations can tip over into fatal incidents. 'Profiling', to use the Somali-English expression for clan revenge killing, is the other primary motive for killing. If a member of one clan has a grievance against another, it is not unusual for them to take the life of a member of another in an act of revenge, even if the victim may not have been known to the perpetrator. At times, the victim may simply have been a member of a particular clan in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Interviews conducted with clan militia provide an insight into the lives and motivations of those involved and the impact of their actions:

> **"You have to be broke and desperate to work on the roadblocks. I started 4 years ago. I was an orphan at 16 and the oldest child. My cousin took me to work on the roadblocks with him. I had no choice, I had to feed my mother and my 4 younger brothers and sisters"**
> Clan-militia member, Middle Shabelle

> **"I was the head of the roadblock and managed both the men and the money. I trusted just one man to collect the money, four men would stand in the road and stop the vehicles whilst the rest held defensive positions"** (to fight off attacks from other clans, AS or state forces). Former roadblocker, Beletweyne

> **"It is a hard business and you need to be merciless – you need to be able to loot, rob and kill people if they refuse your demands."**
> Clan-militia member, Hiran

No evidence was found that the different militia groups operating isbaaro co-operated or even interacted with one or more of the others. Within the limited sample, it appears that each isbaaro is part of a highly localised and quite desperate operation, mostly carried out by young men with little prospects and limited skills.

From the small sample of militia surveyed, the daily takings per individual ranged from $8-$20 for those operating on the western route. Where clan-militia have been driven out onto the rural routes the earnings per day were similar, but with only the occasional passing vehicle, they could go days without taking anything. Of the eight clan-militia interviewed, three people said they would support moves to legitimise roadblocks, four were unwilling and one person did not know. The primary fears were loss of a daily income and lack of an ability to see a credible alternative, presumably based on their own limited framework of experience. That respondents measured income in terms of a daily amount indicates the subsistence levels of income in the rural areas.

The Somalia Human Development Report 2012, which appears to be the last major survey examining life for young people in Somalia, substantiates these findings. It revealed the unemployment rate for youths in Somalia to be among the highest in the world, at 67% among all between 14 to 29 years of age. Furthermore, it stated that 40% of Somali youths who were neither in work nor school were actively looking for work. "This jobless or discouraged group is the

most disadvantaged and most vulnerable to risky and criminal behaviours" (UNDP Somalia, 2013). This is certainly reflected in those operating roadblocks who the researchers met. Minimal opportunities in more rural areas is a key reason why so many are not actively seeking work.

The Somali National Army (SNA) is essentially made up of clan-militia transformed into a unified force. It is an ongoing process with huge challenges, but many in the international community, including the UK Government, see it as critical, with support for strengthening the SNA coming from several donor countries. Alternatives to isbaaro run by clan-militia do exist and must be properly executed given the considerable support of the UN and the international community, and the primary goal of security.

Al-Shabaab

The microcosm of the political economy in respect of AS is a complex one which, like the other power networks, is also based on control and revenue. Whilst money might be the driving force for clan-based militia, this study found that territorial control is equally significant and important to AS.

Road users typically prefer AS-controlled isbaaro over roadblocks operated by the other power networks – although support from local communities who live alongside them is waning. They are well-run and are a vital source of funding for the insurgent group. The coordinated international strategy to defeat Al-Shabaab has been to attack their sources of funding as well as take out the leadership and the insurgents on the ground. The FGS-led alliance has made significant progress and many funding sources have been successfully cut-off. This makes isbaaro-generated revenue even more important.

It has been noted that Al-Shabaab has positioned itself in such a way that, to many, it is a credible alternative to the national federal government. Al-Shabaab has "developed internal structures and disciplines that has created an air of authority and a sense of law and order through developing a range of administrative bodies that are far more effective than those of (the FGS) and its predecessors." (Keatinge, 2014: 9)

There was undoubtedly evidence of this amongst the various groups surveyed. Occasionally, respondents would group 'AS and the FGS' together in terms of a central authority, either to be feared or to be called upon to act.

> **"If I had a problem at a roadblock I would contact the local authority or if I was in an Al-Shabaab area, the local leader"**
> M.M, Hiran

However, Al-Shabaab's almost 10-year stronghold is ending as the FGS and its international allies continue to regain control throughout Somalia. Whilst limited in scope, findings suggest that the political economy of AS roadblocks as a microcosm of the whole, is far from the powerhouse it once was.

How they operate

The first Al-Shabaab checkpoint is approximately 25km west of Beletweyne town at Luqjeelow. Here, for example, the driver of a passenger bus pays a fixed sum of $200 and is issued with a set of payment vouchers, one for each of the following AS checkpoints until Daarusalem, the final Al-Shabaab-controlled checkpoint and 53km south west of Jowhar. At Luqjeelow, all passengers are questioned before they can proceed. All subsequent Al-Shabaab checkpoints are relatively easy to pass through as the soldiers at the roadblocks along the route can tell from the documentation issued that the driver and passengers have paid and have undergone all the checks deemed necessary.

Figure 4: An Al-Shabaab-issued receipt collected by a researcher in December 2015.

Omer is a regular road user who lives and works in Mogadishu but who visits his family in Beletweyne. He described a typical scene at the first Al-Shabaab checkpoints where all passengers are interrogated about who they are and the purpose of their journey. The line of questioning is designed to reveal connections and identify those whom Al-Shabaab deem to be the enemy. The passenger is asked to name people they know (in local government, for example), or to list people in their personal or business networks. Phones are often taken and the insurgents will scroll through the contacts or search through any stored images. The insurgents are dressed in full Al-Shabaab combat gear with their faces hidden. Some, according to the various reports, are young, even children. Another respondent told us how he watched the humiliation of a dignified and respected elder being subjected to such an ordeal by a boy soldier.

Road users surveyed often held conflicting views of Al-Shabaab. As an organisation, they are clearly feared, but many road users expressly stated that they prefer to travel through Al-Shabaab-controlled isbaaro because they are better organised and safer (once the initial checks have been made and unless you cross them). The sums payable at the isbaaro tend to be fixed and after the first one, there are minimal delays. These factors, coupled with the fact that the route is some 40 km shorter than the eastern route, offer road users a shorter, cheaper and safer journey.

A significant proportion of the population are excluded from making the journey in the first place. Anyone who works for the government, government-run institutions, or humanitarian workers, for example would be putting themselves in grave and possibly mortal danger. Estimated revenue of the roadblocks on the western route suggests a daily total of between $6000 and $8000 on typical day which sees approximately twenty trucks on the route in both directions and two or three minibuses. Private cars are rare, with one per day in either direction. Trucks are charged at $300, minibuses at $200 and private cars at $1000. Trucks are also charged an additional tax on the goods they are transporting. One villager, confidently stated that Al-Shabaab takes around $5000 per day from each of the roadblocks between Luqjeelow and Darusalaam, which is broadly in line with this estimation. One respondent told how Al-Shabaab do not just accept cash but take mobile money payments using EVC Plus. It has not been possible to verify this but, if true, it adds to the argument that the insurgent group are the most efficient of the three power groups.

Deploying smart technology is one measure that could reduce "the opportunity for corruption by changing incentives, by closing off loopholes and eliminating misconceived rules that encourage corrupt behaviour" (Lopez- Carlos, 2014). The potential role for the application of smart technology in legitimate control posts should be explored further. The infrastructure to make and receive payments using mobile technology already exists within Somalia and it is widely used. Using this to take road taxes at control posts would bring several immediate benefits, including reducing the need for road users to carry large amounts of cash, lessening the opportunities for extortion and creating an audit trail.

Findings suggest that there are lessons to be learned from the way in which Al-Shabaab organise the isbaaro they control.

The FGS and its allies

Many challenges limit what local authorities are able to achieve, including: limited revenue, scarce resources, lack of capacity and little, if any, effective institutional support structures to manage local or regional government functions. Like their illegal counterparts, state-run control posts have two distinct functions of control and money. Considering the current reality, it is perhaps not surprising that this research revealed that control posts are mismanaged, with evidence of corrupt practice. Staff are poorly trained, poorly supervised and are often paid late, and security plays a secondary role to extortion. Significant sums of money are generated but there is no transparency nor accountability.

The control posts themselves are self-financing and some money does support public services albeit in an unstructured sense. Equally, some funds remain unaccounted for and there is a suggestion that they are diverted into the pockets of a local political elite for personal and political gain. The overwhelming majority of control posts on the routes between Beletweyne and Mogadishu are now under FGS control. Revealingly, no single official could confirm the exact number, which supports the evidence that the power dynamics are still shifting.

Interviews with local and regional authority figures highlighted that there is neither a coordinated system for managing the control posts nationally or regionally, nor clear lines of responsibility for 'owning' the control posts: "The control posts are not counted. Every town you enter has controls. Some collect money, others are for security and then there are the mobile control posts" - (name withheld).

The FGS sets up additional mobile control posts according to need. For example, during the fieldwork stage of this study, at least three additional mobile security control posts were set-up in anticipation of the Hiran and Middle Shabelle State Formations Conference in Jowhar. In some towns, the same team, under the same SNA commander, manage more than one control post. Buurane and Jowhar are two such examples of these and the FGS considers these to be one control post.   Changes in control between the different power groups is ongoing. Between December 2015 and March 2016, for example, the FGS had taken control of Ceel Baraf from Al-Shabaab. While AMISOM plays a major role in regaining overall control of areas, AMISOM representatives were clear that the SNA oversaw control posts and that they only provide support against attack or insurgencies. There are occasional news stories which report human rights violations by AMISOM soldiers at control points.

Revenue collectors (usually one or two at each checkpoint) are regional or district state employees and earn $10 per day. The system may vary but the norm is for the revenue collection team to deduct their wages themselves and take the remainder to the district and/or regional offices. Revenue collectors report to the district commissioner and or the regional governor. Training is negligible and effective management almost non-existent. Most of the soldiers at the control posts have one day off per week. The rest of their time is spent permanently at the control posts with rest periods taken on the understanding that they are always on-call.

Not all the revenue taken at the checkpoints is passed to the state authorities. Many road users are given receipts for one sum when they have paid significantly more. A researcher witnessed this at a control post: the driver of the minibus she was travelling in paid $65 and was given a receipt for just $5. Other civilian road users and truck drivers gave similar evidence. A revenue collection team employee from Beletweyne revealed, on condition of anonymity, that the four checkpoints in the town generate $5-6,000 per day. That equates to around $2m per year. From the data gathered travelling between Beletweyne and Mogadishu and based on FGS control posts only, at least $10-£15m is an estimated visible amount.

The money trail has proved impossible to determine conclusively but there are often tensions between the Regional Governor and the District Controller, or the SNA Commander who all want a sizeable share, if not full control, of the pot. One example of this are the control posts in Beletweyne itself where tax revenue collection and management has been a problem since the current local government structures were established in Beletweyne district in early 2012. The former Governor of Hiran region, Abdifatah Afrah, refused to co-operate in any way with the District Commissioner of Beletweyne, Macalin Qalaafoow, about taxes. Thus, the District Commissioner established a new control post on the west side of Beletweyne town where his Gaaljecel clan dominates and for which he has full control.

A crude and limited form of indirect public funding exists. For example, it is understood that the current Hiran Governor regularly gives money to the Police Commander. In the absence of wages being paid regularly, police officers must be compensated for them to perform their duties. It is almost certain too however, that the police commander himself will take his own cut before sharing out the remainder. This system of apportioning money undoubtedly extends beyond the police commander to other notable players, such as local politicians and senior state officials.

There is a need to support the state to effectively manage control posts within a legitimate framework which aids security, state-building and facilitates sustainable development. Staff need to be well-trained to manage the control posts, with the security and revenue collecting functions underpinned by clearly defined policies and procedures for all involved to follow. Equally, revenue must be properly accounted for.

Recent precedents do exist. In Somaliland, for example, control posts still exist but they are firmly established, managed and run by the local authorities, under the control of the Ministry of Interior. Main checkpoints at the entrance of cities and towns have the function of policing smuggling and taxing legitimate imports as well as performing an essential security role – in much the same way that border controls exist throughout the world. Charges are set and receipts for payments are issued at the collection point. The revenue generated goes into the national budget under the control of the Ministry of Interior. This system is not without its own instances of corrupt practices but, the public view the control posts as predominantly safe, law-enforcing environments.

Equally, one of the first acts of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud who was elected in September 2012 was to remove more than 60 illegal isbaaro in Mogadishu. In late November 2012, SNA forces began removing those in the Yaqshid and Karan districts before expanding into the Wadajiir district. By the end of the year, residents were seeing a significant improvement in security.

The system for passing through control posts must be as safe and as straightforward as possible for all using the roads. Tariffs should be fixed and clearly displayed, security checks should be carried out thoroughly and professionally. Road-users need to clearly understand the different functions of control posts and the extent of their legitimacy, and control posts need to be efficient enough that the experience of using them consistently matches expectations.

The impact of roadblocks

Current road users

Road travel is an arduous and often terrifying ordeal in Somalia. Outside of the towns, the only traffic is armed security vehicles, trucks transporting goods or aid, and minibuses transporting passengers - although some people buy a place on a truck rather than travelling by bus. Private cars are rare. This study included interviews with seventeen regular road users, all of whom travelled by bus. Of those, four said they travelled the route six or more times a year, nine travelled between three and five times a year and four people only once or twice a year.

> **"I was with a group of friends from University travelling from Beletweyne to Mogadishu. At a small settlement called Haraale between Al-Shabaab and government controlled areas, the clan-militia hunt. They stopped the vehicle we were in and demanded a huge sum of money. A quarrel broke out and the militia shot the driver dead and wounded two of the passengers."**

All expressed fears and/or recounted adverse experiences at roadblocks. Examples given ranged from delays at checkpoints or the poor state of the roads, to killings, rape, robbery, harassment, victimisation and general widespread terror at the other. Several respondents said the situation had improved in recent times, citing worse atrocities during Barre's regime, during the civil war or when Al-Shabaab were in greater control. All the serious crimes that respondents recounted to us, were perpetrated by clan-militia or Al-Shabaab.

The most cited reason for a decrease in the levels of violent crime was that the state is once again in control, albeit with caveats as to their ability to function effectively. There is evidence to suggest that low-level crimes have become so common as to be accepted: "It's OK now. There are still many roadblocks but they only need money. Killing and raping has decreased."

Road users do not carry anything that they do not consider essential for fear of robbery, including any personal documentation. Deeply held fears and trauma are based on personal previous experience or on first-hand knowledge of the hostile environment of roadblocks, and remain uppermost in the minds of most people undertaking this journey. Respondents recognised the economic benefits of roadblocks on local commerce activities, particularly the numerous small shops and restaurants situated alongside the various checkpoints and in respect of the jobs the control posts themselves generate:

> **"If I had a problem at a roadblock would go through a family member who has a relationship with government officials. It is much easier to get help when you have a connection. If you report an issue directly to the government it is hard to get them to believe your case. Mostly they just dismiss it"**
> (name withheld)

Former road users

It is easy to find people who no longer take the road to Mogadishu. For some it is because they have a job or position which makes them particularly vulnerable to AS attacks. One respondent, for example, was a former Hiran Regional Authority official and is known to the insurgent group. Apart from government officials, other community members who are at great personal risk include humanitarian workers and prominent local elders. For others, their decision not to travel by road is because of a past traumatic experience:

> **"My job means that I can't travel for security reasons. My family live in Jowhar so I never get to see them. My only contact with them is on the phone. It is a horrible situation"**
> Civil society activist

Findings highlight that adverse experiences and attitudes were specifically in relation to AS and clan-militia rather than directed toward state-run control posts. Given that many in this cohort cannot travel because of AS-imposed restrictions or have suffered trauma from during the time that clan warlords had control of the region, but it adds to the overall sense that the FGS does currently have the support of the wider population, as well as regaining control of the territories.

Former road users share the view that control posts are the responsibility of the state, but that the FGS are currently ineffective in dealing with them:

> **"The government can do something but only once they have power"**
> I.M humanitarian worker

Both current and former road users, regular or occasional, have unequivocal views that personal safety at control posts is paramount, but that control posts should also be effectively managed and accountable both in terms of their function and the money they generate.

Transport companies

Unreliable and expensive road transportation is a growing constraint to Somalia's development. Trucks are one of the most common vehicles on the roads. They generally range between four and 34 tonne, and are primarily used for transporting goods, livestock or aid. The conditions in which they operate are extremely challenging. In addition, these heavy vehicles are often severely overweight. There is no regulatory framework within which they operate and no maximum loads. This puts even greater stress on both the roads and the vehicles. Vehicles can also be held up for several hours adding to their costs.

> **"I have always been a livestock trader but I am seriously considering closing my business. For me it is not just about the cost of roadblocks, it is the length of time the journey takes because of the roadblocks. Just before the start of the last Deyr (rainy) season, it was very hot indeed and yet at roadblock after roadblock we were held up for too long. By the time we got to Mogadishu we had lost 100 out of 500 goats. It is inhumane. It also means I made no profit on that journey. I don't just support my family but other relatives too."**
> H.N, Beletweyne

Every respondent from the transport companies spoke of fears on every journey which included extortion, hijacking, threats and harassment, robbery and looting, and even death. As with other road users, all had numerous examples to share. A much higher percentage of the examples of serious crime were recent. There are two possible reasons for this: (i) they are travelling more frequently which increases the chances statistically and (ii) they are likely to be carrying cargo, which has a greater monetary value than a passenger bus and is therefore worth more to the roadblockers.

There is an ongoing problem in respect of clan profiling. Two of the respondents who knew of, or who had witnessed recent murders, explained they were motivated by clan revenge (profiling) and this was alluded to in many of the interviews with those in the business of road transport. Road transport operators believe that the power to address the problems lies with the state (locally, regionally and or nationally), but this is tempered with the view that the state is currently not willing and or able to do so.

Road transport operators have developed alternative ways of navigating their way through the various roadblocks. One technique used specifically to mitigate the risks of profiling is to employ drivers who are from the same clan as those occupying the areas they need to travel through. Findings also found that brokering is a whole sub-industry. Brokers, or maqalas as they are known in Somali, are individuals (usually former roadblockers themselves) who act as a facilitator/negotiator between the road users and the roadblockers.

> **"I use different techniques when I take this road. Mostly I pay a broker who used to be a roadblocker or who belongs to the same clan as the leader of the roadblocks. Alternatively, I will hire someone to travel with me who is from the same clan. If I can't do either of those things it costs me a lot more money to get through the roadblocks."**
> I.D, Beletweyne

> **"Seven months ago, militia stopped my bus near to Gasaalo, south of Jowhar. They killed my conductor for clan revenge"**
> M.A, Mogadishu

> **"Three months ago one of our trucks was hijacked and taken near to the Ethiopian border. It took us two months to negotiate its safe return"**
> Manager of transportation company, Mogadishu

Information to help better understand the economics of road transportation is extremely sparse. With a limited cohort and many variables, it is difficult to estimate the costs of operating a truck in Somalia. However, three of the respondents provided a monetary breakdown of a one-way trip and it is possible to calculate the percentage of the total cost of a trip, which relates directly to the roadblocks (table 2). Figures given were taken at face value and do not include many additional costs which would ordinarily be considered such as maintenance and repair, depreciation, the cost of delays, or contribution to overheads. If these were taken into account, then the overall cost would increase and the percentage attributable to roadblocks would be lower.

Table 2: The cost of operating trucks between Beletweyne and Mogadishu, according to survey respondents

Total cost of trip (USD)	Direct costs of roadblocks (USD)	% attributable to roadblocks
4160	1150	27.6%
4900	1100	22%
4500	900	20%

A useful comparison tool is the Road User Cost Knowledge System (RUCKS), an application analysts use to identify and compare road user costs per kilometre in developing countries. From its 2006 results, the average cost of a 20 tonne truck in a developing country, based on an annual 70,000 km driven on unpaved roads in maximum roughness of terrain (according to its scale) is $0.59/ kilometre. To undertake a superficial and thoroughly unscientific comparison: to achieve an annual total of 77,000 km in Somalia, a similar truck would need to make the journey between Beletweyne and Mogadishu 230 times (335 km). Given the mean average of total costs given by the road haulers above, the unit cost per kilometre in Somalia is:

(230 x 4520) / 77000 km = $13.50 (compared to the RUCKS figure of $0.59)

Even allowing for a considerable margin of error in both calculations, the combined impact of the current road infrastructure and the political economy of roadblocks is grossly detrimental to the development of Somalia. Delays mean that people go without vital supplies and additional costs are passed on to the end users be they consumers or aid agencies. The role of roadblocks in impairing the delivery of humanitarian relief and aid has reduced as Al-Shabaab have been driven out of more areas, but it remains a very real problem with few humanitarian agencies travelling further north than Jowhar.

Local communities

Local communities suffer adversely as a direct result of the cost of passing through roadblocks. A simple comparison of the same products in Mogadishu and in Hiran or Middle Shabelle highlights evidence of the local-level increase. For example, one kg of sugar, a high-volume staple, costs $0.60 in Mogadishu, whereas the same amount of sugar costs $0.70 in Jowhar – a 13% increase. A shirt costs $6 in Bakaaro Market and is on sale for more than $10 in Beletweyne, an increase of more than 30%.

> **"There is a visible impact of roadblocks on the local economy. Roadblocks can increase the market price because traders who deliver the goods from other cities have to increase their transportation costs. This often means they cannot sell at the same price that they were yesterday. Sometimes roadblocks stop the movement of traders around the region which means some products are not available."**
> Former clan-militia leader, Buuloburte

The impact on local communities who live alongside the roadblocks is also considerable. Roadblocks continue to be the main site of armed clashes and the fight for control. Despite the clear progress that the allied forces are making, many control posts in Hiran and Middle Shabelle are still vulnerable to attack and it is likely to be sometime until they are fully secure. Equally, there are still territories (and isbaaro) to recapture and secure, particularly north of Jowhar. This makes them dangerous places not only for the roadblockers, but for the citizens travelling through them and those living nearby- many of whom are displaced (temporarily or otherwise) because of conflict.

Roadblocks present the opportunity for local communities to offer food and rest facilities, enabling them to generate an income. Hiilweyne control post, 30km northwest of Mogadishu is a typical example. A local trader who has a roadside kiosk explained how it is good for local trade with travellers stopping at the restaurants, teashops and purchasing mira (khat) and cigarettes: "Without the control posts we would not be here."

The brokers

In the absence of a safe and effective road infrastructure network and in the face of roadblocks which are, especially for road transport operators, dangerous and unpredictable environments, a 'business' of navigating control posts and roadblocks, or 'brokering' has developed. We interviewed two brokers who explained what they do:

"I don't work for either the Somali Government or Al-Shabaab but I do have a relationship with the roadblocks. We agree a fixed payment for each truck. I earn well. I have had a villa built in Mogadishu for me and my family, I own two minibuses which operate in Mogadishu and last year I bought a farm in Lower Shabelle.

I began working on the roadblocks in 2003 during the time of the warlords. At that point there were no legal roadblocks they were all run by clan-militia. It was a very dangerous time. I was part of a militia but I have been decided to leave because it is not good job. All the time you are at risk. Either you are killing innocent people or you are in danger of being killed yourself.

My role is facilitating both sides. The truck owner knows the amount of money needed for the roadblocks, but without me he runs the risk of being asked for much more money and that can cause huge problems. I heard of one truck who paid over $13,000 USD for a journey from Mogadishu to Jarati (In the Somali-Ethiopian region). It is not just about the money; I can also speed up the journey by preventing delays at the roadblocks. You could sum up my role by saying I ensure a journey is kept to a fixed time and a fixed price. For example, a journey from Mogadishu to Beletweyne can take 4 days without me but I have taken trucks through in less than 36 hours.

"There is another problem with roadblocks too. People might be subjected to other abuses such as harassment or arrest. Brokers know the guys at the roadblocks and help road users to go through safely. Mostly I work with the same twelve truck companies which operate in different regions. It's not just the truck companies and the roadblockers I work with. I work with the people in power and even when administrations change I do my best to get to know them and collaborate with them. In every job you have to be flexible and collaborate with whoever has the power.

How much I charge depends of the tonnage of the trucks. I have a number of people who work with me when I need them. Sometimes it is better to arrange a convoy and then you need extra people."
A.C, Mogadishu

"I work closely with the business community and the truck drivers or owners. I don't have an office where people can come to me. I have a sense of pride and duty in what I do. I simplify the journeys for the road truck drivers between Middle Shabelle and Mogadishu. I also deal with all of the local administrations located on the route. I have been doing this since 2004. Before that I was a conductor on the trucks. It was really difficult. Every week I saw killings or rape victims on the road. Because of my connections, I decided to become a Muqalas [broker].

> **"There are two types of roadblocks – the visible roadblocks that you can see but there are also the invisible ones. These are the security checkpoints who also take money from you even though they are only supposed to carry out security checks. It is a form of double taxation and sometimes as well as more money they take goods too.**
>
> **When I take on a new job, I am in constant communication with the roadblockers either by phone or direct meetings. There is no regular pattern to my work. Sometimes I am very busy and sometimes I may go a couple of weeks without work. Brokering is not something that you can get a license for from the Somali Government. If you are a broker you don't want to register with the army. Most brokers are independent because otherwise they can only work with the army, they wouldn't be able to work with AS or clan-militia"**
> A.A, Mogadishu

Anyone who regularly uses the roads, including bus drivers and transport operators, uses brokers to facilitate their travel. The brokers work with all three groups running the roadblocks, effectively creating a cartel. Regional and district authorities engage with and benefit from this practice as well as individuals. This business has increased the number of people with a personal interest in sustaining the current status quo.

In the absence of an over-arching system, clear lines of authority and accountability, illicit price fixing, extortion and no guarantees of safe passage, brokers have become indispensable. In becoming part of the system, they have also become part of the problem, doing deals and price-fixing with roadblockers and local administrations, sharing the spoils and charging for a service that should never be required in the first place.

Across all stakeholder groups, there is a rise in support for change. The study has spoken extensively with representatives of all the stakeholder groups, to identify people with whom to work and to assess the opportunities and desire for co-designing and delivering change.

The political elite

The success of future interventions will largely depend on quantitative data to support the case for change and a willingness of those in power to work together and lend support. Within the FGS, there is overlap between ministries. The primary responsibility for control posts is the Ministry of Interior, but the Ministry of Defence is responsible for the armed forces and, therefore, the SNA. The Ministry of Justice, the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Transport are all part of the political economy of roadblocks.

With so many conflicting priorities it is unsurprising that there is no coordinated strategy for roadblocks. Within government there are MPs and junior ministers who have openly expressed a desire to transform the current culture of roadblocks, although this has been expressed through politically attractive and timely soundbites rather than considered policies. For example, in 2016 the Minister for Agriculture, Mohammed Hassan Fiqi, spoke of the negative impact of roadblocks on road users following a successful mission to remove isbaaaro.

Buy-in is much more likely at a national level but will have the most impact at a regional and district level. One way to sell the benefits is to have the quantitative data to support the economic argument. There is currently no data on the volume of traffic on the roads, the types of vehicles, the number of journeys, the cost of journeys and so on. If staff at control posts could record accurate data a more compelling argument for change would be much more likely.

Conclusion

The road network is, for the clear majority of the Somali population, the only means available for those needing to travel for trade/business or for personal reasons. Much humanitarian aid is also transported via road. When the network is both dangerous and costly, the impact is considerable and far-reaching. However, state-run roadblocks or control posts are a necessary feature of the transition to stability. From a security standpoint, it is difficult to envisage how they could be abolished in the short to medium term.

Similarly, in the absence of a centralised and efficient taxation system, the revenue they generate is an important income stream for the district and regional authorities. This has major implications for state-building as transformational change will likely only be possible with the negotiated engagement of the local political elite. Indications that some low-level engagement is already happening must be harnessed and built on. There is much that can be done to begin to improve the accountability and transparency of roadblocks that accounts for the needs of local stakeholders, encourages self-help and builds on local capacities. It is equally necessary to ensure that the process of change is coordinated and integrated into cross-cutting policy development and work programmes which address challenges and problems through the different levels of governance at national, regional and local level.

The evidence gathered in this research study presents a compelling argument for removing or mitigating the barriers to road use to dramatically improve the lives of individuals and significantly promote regional development and growth from local-level government to the communities who live alongside the control posts. This argument is supported at the national state and ministerial level but needs to be effectively communicated to those at a regional and district level in order to win the necessary local support to effect lasting change. Currently the FGS does not consider roadblocks to be an urgent priority and it has neither current plans, nor resources nor capacity to address the issue in the face of numerous challenges. However, the Ministry of the Interior has indicated that it would be willing to support and work with planned interventions from outside of government.

There is no single, straightforward intervention that will transform the political economy of roadblocks, it is complex, and corruption and instability are endemic. All the short, medium and long term goals and the steps which can be taken to achieve them requires consideration. If control posts become safer and more accessible, then more people will travel by road. If more people can use the roads safely and freely, the greater the benefits and the impact on Somali people's lives.

Short-term goals should include the simplest and least threatening interventions (as they would appear to those with vested interests in maintaining the status quo) but which will increase openness and transparency to those looking to the state to deliver positive change.

In the medium term, the objective must be for local people to realise tangible benefits that safer and more effective control posts will have on their lives. Such benefits would include: lower transportation costs and therefore lower prices for goods, commodities and services; higher levels of humanitarian aid reaching people in need; and people in need of family or medical support being able to access travel more easily. Further, increased access to markets, goods and services would attract investment, as well as lowering costs, and would create employment opportunities. All of which would support improved security and state-building.

The long-term goal is for a primary road transport system in sufficiently good condition, which connects Mogadishu with its federal capitals, major towns and cities, provides access to its ports and borders, and allows for the free movement of trade and people. Such a system also needs to connect smaller towns and villages, giving them vital access to local markets, and needs to be able to withstand harsh environmental conditions. Toll roads may help to finance reconstruction and in many countries worldwide, there is provision for some form of control checks within a legitimate legal framework.

Within this, the road network itself would include various gateways and intersections, which typically attract businesses and organisations and therefore encourage further development. The current benefits that local village and town traders experience, providing rest facilities on the routes would grow rather than diminish as the volume of traffic increases, promoting local as well as national growth.

With a long-term, planned, coordinated and inclusive approach, it is possible to reclaim Somalia's haunted roads.

Recommendations

This study has identified an urgent need and a local commitment to reclaim the roads to facilitate and sustain safe transit. While such a commitment is not shared by all those with an interest in the current political economy, there are opportunities to develop the scope for organic as well as planned change. This is critical because any interventions to change the current political economy of roadblocks must be firmly grounded in the principle of collective self-help rather than dependency. Interventions should be relevant and effective at meeting local needs, because local people have clearly demonstrated that they know what their needs are, and they have knowledge about what will and will not work. Somali-led interventions, with outsiders in a supporting role, are also much more likely to be sustainable because they will be grounded in local capacity and motivation.

The findings from this report have identified six key areas of focus to start the process of reclaiming Somalia's roads and to change the political economy of roadblocks:

1. Develop a multi-stakeholder platform with the authority to co-design and co-deliver Somali-led interventions to achieve the transformation of the political economy of roadblocks based on principles of accountability and transparency

2. Negotiate with regional and district authorities to improve the operation, oversight and reputation of control posts

3. Use a combination of training and technology to tackle corruption facilitators and increase safety, accessibility and efficiency

4. Increase the empirical knowledge base by collecting quantitative data on road usage to inform policy and projects

5. Build on early intervention successes to change public perceptions and experience and to promote greater road use

6. Ensure co-ordination and integration the with Federal Government's priority strategic goal to rehabilitate and rebuild the road infrastructure network.

References

FAO SWALIM. (2016). *Update on river levels along Shabelle River.* 21 March 2016. Rome: Somalia Water and Land Information Management, FAO. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Shabelle%20River%20Levels%20Update%20March%202016.pdf

FGS (2013a). *The Somali compact.* Somalia: Federal Government of Somalia. http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/new-deal-for-somalia conference/sites/default/files/the_somali_compact.pdf

FGS (2013b). *Economic recovery plan 2014-15.* Somalia: Federal Government of Somalia. http://mof.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Somalia-Economic-Recovery-Plan-2014-2015.pdf

Lopez-Carlos, A. (2014). Six strategies to fight corruption, 14th May 2014. The World Bank Future Development Blog. http://blogs.worldbank.org/futuredevelopment/six-strategies-fight-corruption

Keatinge, T. (2014). *The role of finance in defeating Al-Shabaab.* London: Royal United Services Institute. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201412_whr_2-14_keatinge_web_0.pdf

UNDP Somalia. (2013). *Somalia human development report 2013: Empowering youth for peace and development.* Nairobi: United Nations Development Programme Somalia. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/242/somalia_report_2012.pdf

Appendix A: Mapping roadblocks between Beletweyne and Mogadishu

1. Buuno Liiqliiqata / Liiqliiqato - a bridge crossing point in Beletweyne

Beletweyne is in the Shabelle River Valley near the Ogaden, 335km north of Mogadishu. It has a population of around 67,200.

See also: http://fortuneofafrica.com/somalia/beledweyne-town/

The Shabelle River divides Beletweyne into eastern and western sections.

Location	The main bridge across the Shabelle River connecting east and west of Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	0 km
Approximate distance from Mogadishu	335 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	1 km

2. Beletweyne/Beledweyne / Buundoweyn / Buundo Weyn / Beled Weyne

Beletweyne consists of four main districts: Buundoweyn, Howlwadaag, Kooshin and Xaawotaako

Location	In the centre of town
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	1 km
Approximate distance from Mogadishu	334 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	2 km

3. Horseed

Location	Inside Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	3 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	332 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	5 km

4. Gambarlaawe/Gumburlaawe

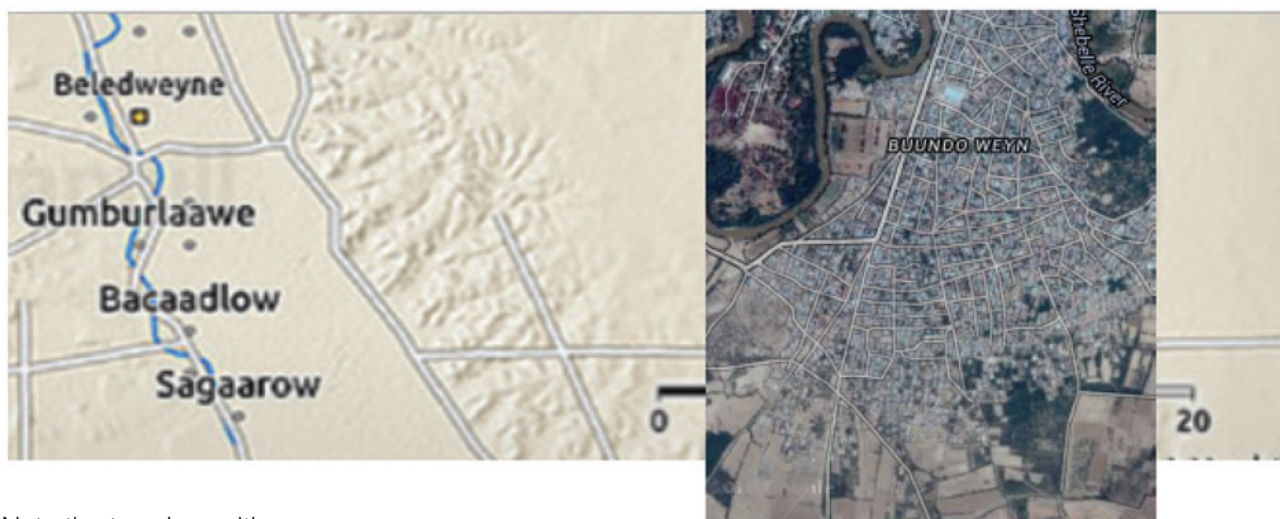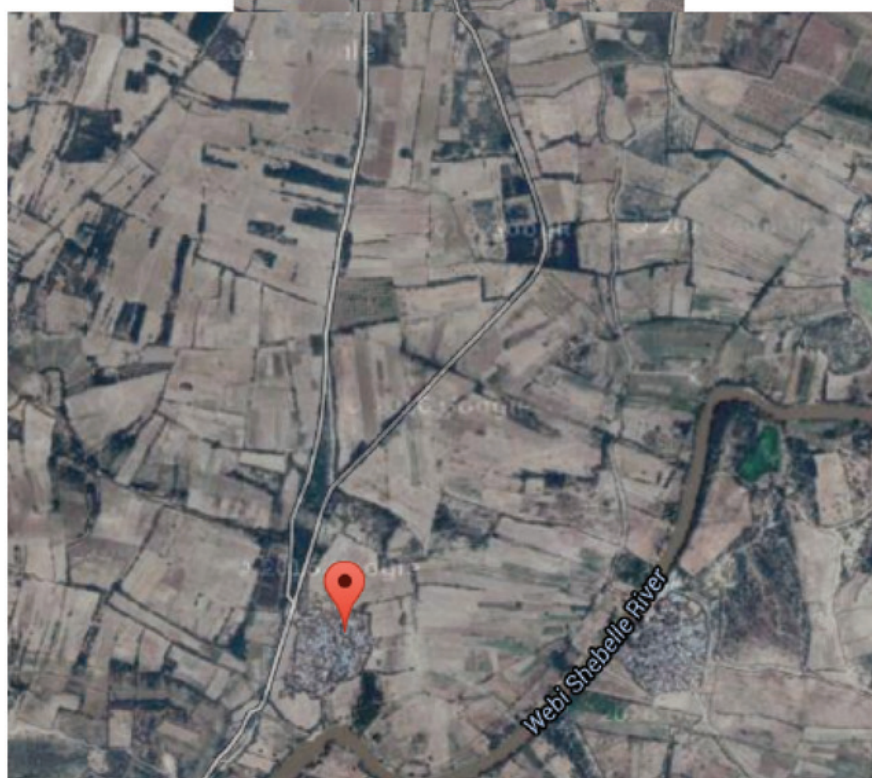| Location	5km south of Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	8 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	327 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	17 km

The two maps below show the position of Gambarlaawe at the first major junction of two roads immediately south of Beletweyne
(http://tinyurl.com/zl4vvos and http://tinyurl.com/zgwubd5)

Note the proximity of Gambarlaawe to Beletweyne

Note the town's position
as a roadblock where two roads
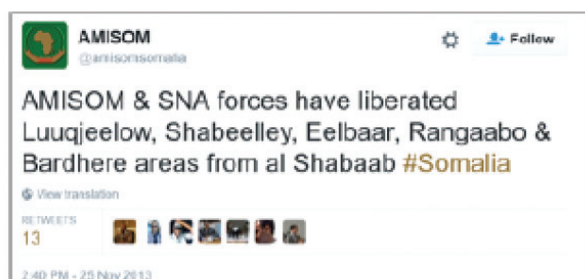come together just south
of Beletweyne.

5. Luuqjeelo

Location	25km SW of Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	25 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	310 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	15 km

www.geographic.org/geographic_names/name.php?uni=-4570301&fid=5790&c=somalia

As the examples below highlight, this area is disputed. At the time of this research study it was under Al-Shabaab control.

November 2013:

AMISOM
@amisomsomalia

AMISOM & SNA forces have liberated Luuqjeelow, Shabeelley, Eelbaar, Rangaabo & Bardhere areas from al Shabaab #Somalia

View translation

RETWEETS
13

2:40 PM - 25 Nov 2013

January 2015: *Al-Shabaab have beheaded a number of Islamic scholars Tabliiqiyiinta near the village of Luuqjeelow in the Goboa region.*
(http://tinyurl.com/hwqqveb)

6. Kalabeyr / Kala- Bayr

Location	40 km south of Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	40 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	295 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	20 km

27 November 2011: "More troops from Ethiopia were spotted Saturday advancing towards Beletweyn…. The strong force had moved from its previous position at Kalabayr, a strategic road junction#…. about 17 km from Fer"
www.hiiraan.com/print2_news/2011/Nov/ethiopian_troops_advancing_into_central_somalia.aspx
As a strategic road junction then it makes sense to have a roadblock positioned there on the main road, Wadda Buulebarde.


Kalabeyr is approximately in this area

Fer Fer

7. Caliganey

Location	60km SE of Beletweyne
District/Region	Beletweyne/Hiran
Who controls it?	Clan militia (Macawisleey)
District Commissioner (if under state control)	Mohamed Osman Qalafow
Regional Governor	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	60 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	275 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	35 km

8. Buqda Aqable, Buq Aqable, Búqda 'Aqáble, Búq 'Aqáble or Buqda Caqable

Location	95k south of Buuloburte
District/Region	Buuloburte/Hiran
Who controls it?	Al-Shabaab
District Commissioner (if it was under state control)	Abdi-Aziz Durow Abdi
Regional Governor (if it was under state control)	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander (if it was under state control)	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	95 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	240 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	70 km

Location in Somalia.
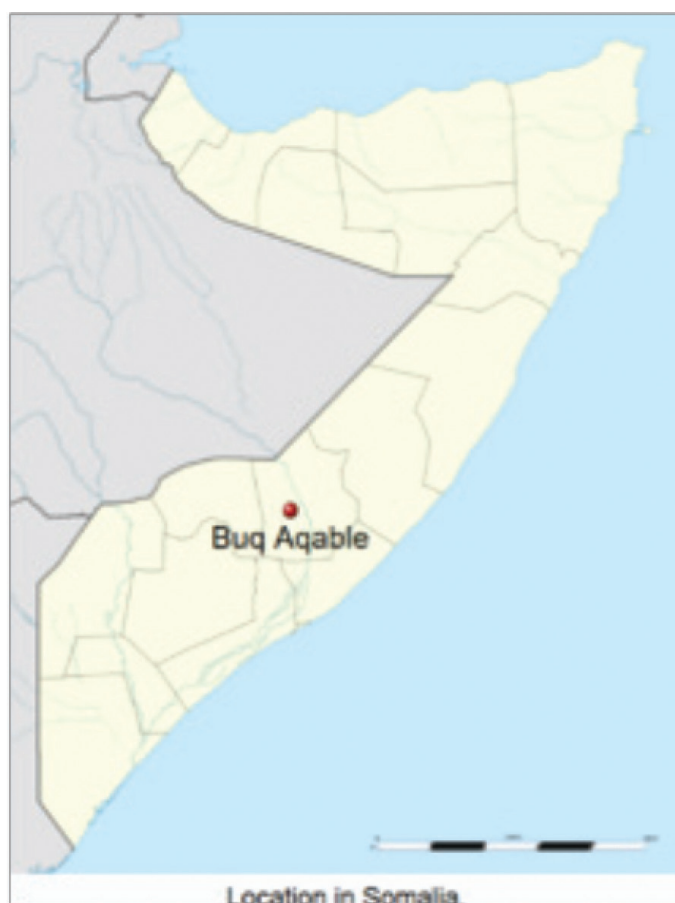
"With a resident population of about 20,000 people, Buq Aqable is 90 km south of Beletweyne and 45 km from Buuloburte. The district was established in early 18th century by elders of Gaaljecel clan and it is the base for the Gaaljecel clan leader(UGAAS). In March 2014, Somali Armed Forces assisted by AMISOM troops captured the town from AS. The offensive was part of an intensified military operation by the allied forces to remove the insurgent group from the remaining areas in southern Somalia under its control. In September of 2015, AS retook the city from Somalia Armed Forces."
(**Source:** Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buqdaaqable)

Below: Mogadishu road at/near Buq Aqable
http://tinyurl.com/hfgengo

Below: Map of Buq Aqable: the blue, rectangular building (lower right) is the Mercy School shown on the map below.

Below: Map showing the relationship of Buq Aqable to the town of Buuloburte

Below: Map showing the relationship of Buq Aqable to the town of Buuloburte

## 9. Shaw

Shaw is a source of fresh water for the region.

Location	40 km west of Jalalaqsi
District/Region	Jalalaqsi/Hiran
Who controls it?	AS
District Commissioner (if it was under state control)	Mohamed Abdulle Fidow
Regional Governor (if it was under state control)	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander (if it was under state control)	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	160 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	175 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	39 km

The map shows its position and its importance as a water source.

Sources: http://sddr.faoswalim.org/river_atlas.php
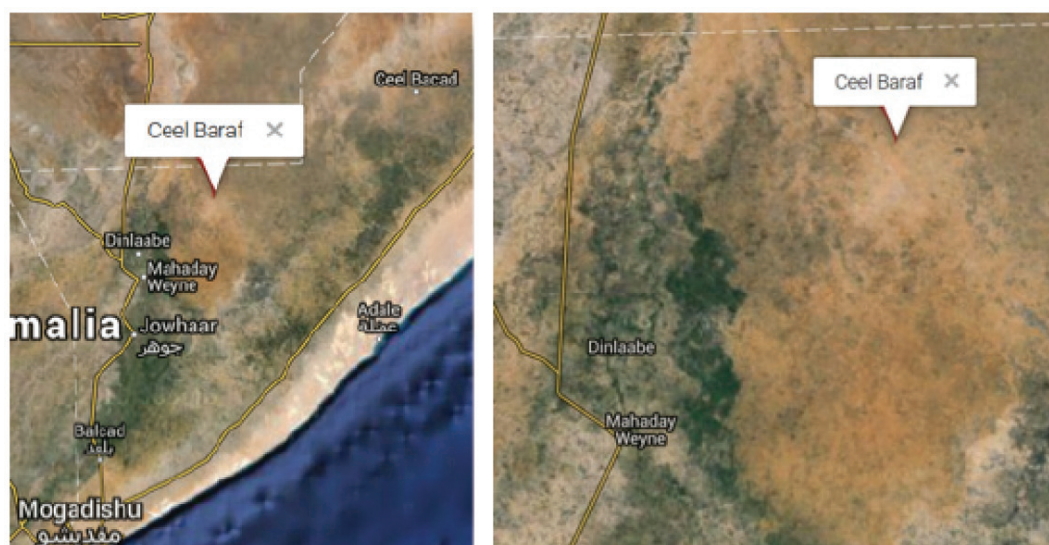http://geographic.org/geographic_names/name.php?uni=-4568001&fid=5787&c=somalia

Source: http://sddr.faoswalim.org/river_atlas.php
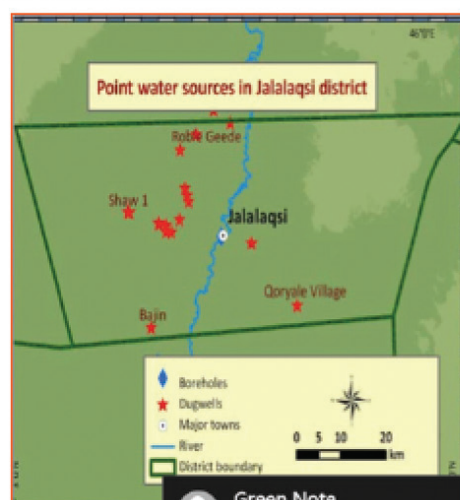
10. Ceel Baraf, Ceelbaraf

Location	15 km north of Mahaday, 3° 14' 0" North, 45° 46' 0" East
District/Region	Mahaday/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Sharif Abdukar Ahmed
Regional Governor	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Guglawe)
Military Commander	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	199 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	136 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	12 km

In December 2015 when the field research for this study took place, Ceel Baraf was under Al-Shabaab control. In February 2016, there were reports of fighting against Al-Shabaab in/around Ceelbaraf. When this information was verified in March 2016, it was under FGS control. **Source:** http://tinyurl.com/hzuvf68

Source: http://www.geographic.org/geographic_names/name.php?uni=-4558473&fid=5781&c=somalia

The maps below shows that, with its radiating roads/tracks, Ceel Baraf is an ideal site for a roadblock.

11. Buurane

Location	23 km north of Jowhar, 2° 48' 4" N, 45° 7' 30" E
District/Region	Jowhar/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Abdulkadir Ali Mohamed (Buufuule)
Regional Governor	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Guglawe)
Military Commander	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur
Approximate distance from Beletweyne	211 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	124 km
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	13 km

The route from Ceel Baraf to Buurane:
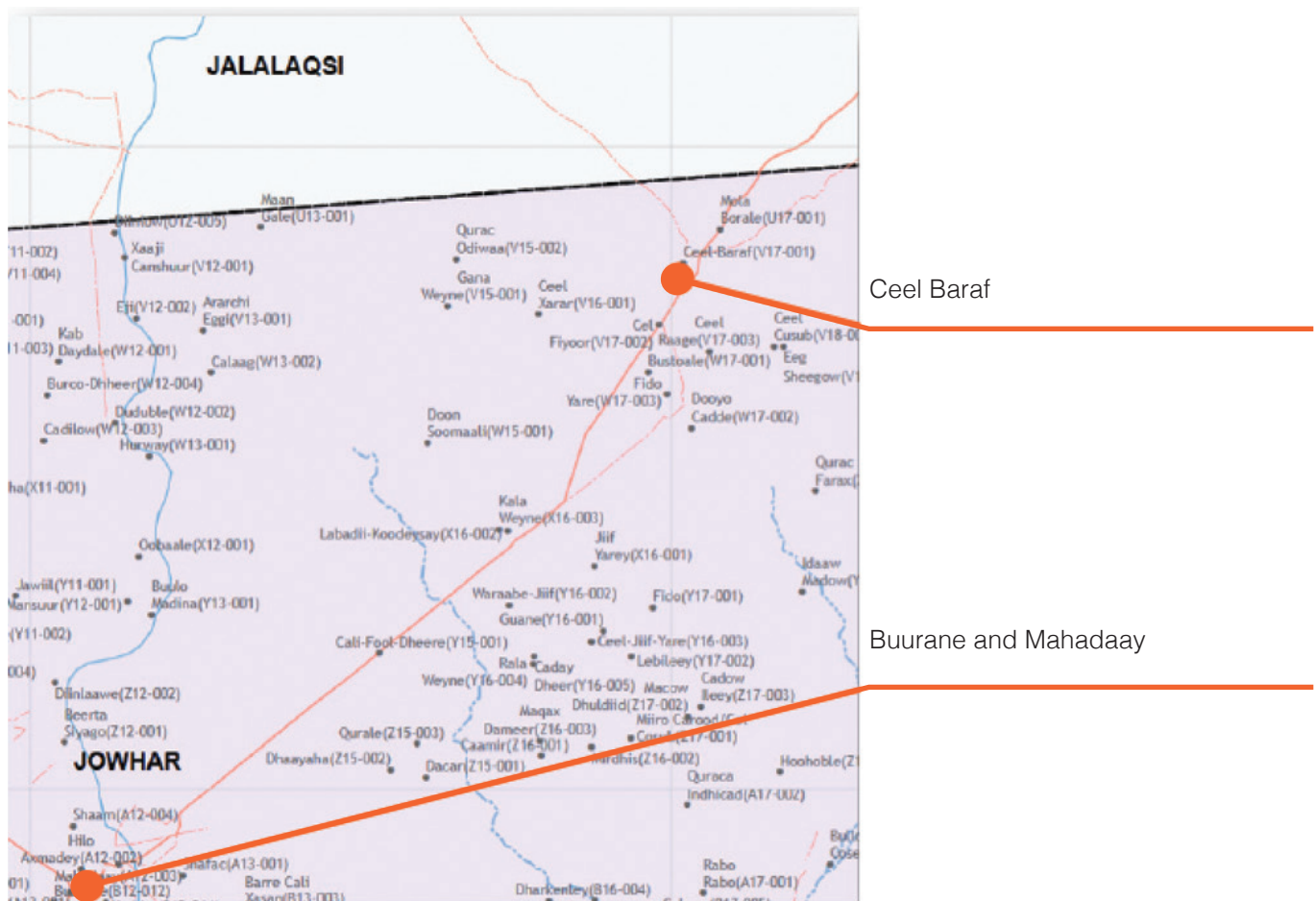
The markers on the maps below left show the approximate position of this roadblock.

Sources: www.maplandia.com/somalia/sh-dhexe/jawhar/buurane/ and
http://itouchmap.com/?c=so&UF=-3217301&UN=-4557559&DG=PPL

The maps below show Buurane and its position at the junction of the main road with the branch off to Mahady Weyne. This position makes it a strategic place to position a roadblock.

(**Source:** www.geographic.org/geographic_names/name.php?uni=-4557559&fid=5769&c=somalia)

12. Mahady Bridge, Mahaday Weyne

| Location	30 km north of Jowhar
District/Region	Jowhar/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Abdulkadir Ali Mohamed (Buufuule)
Regional Governor	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Guglawe)
Military Commander	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur
Approximate distance from Beledweyne	214 km
Approximate distance to Mogadishu	121 Km (Jawhar to Mogadishu is 91 km)
Approximate distance to next roadblock/roadblock	N/A

The map below shows the town of Mahaday Weyne. The area is agricultural with crops grown alongside the river, including mangos. The meandering river, with its flooding danger, is clearly visible.
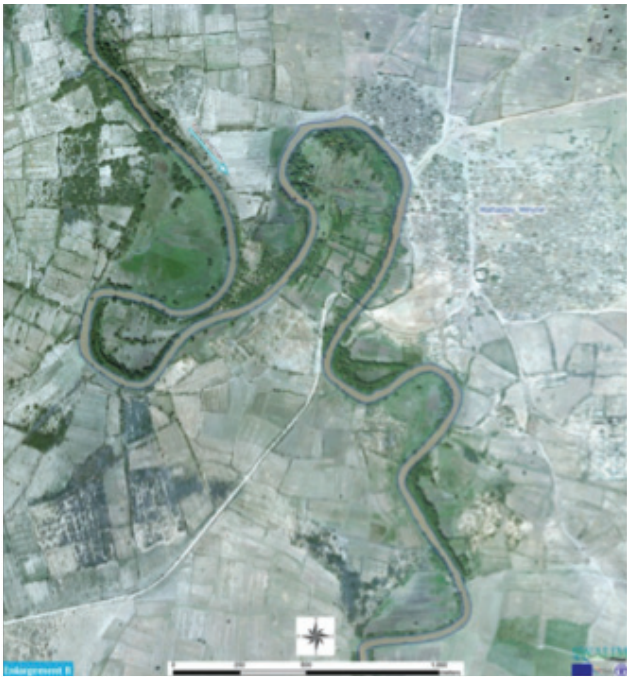
Below: Another view of Mahadaay Weyn Bridge:
Source: www.youtube.com/channel/UCuW9_b7pATGTgv46RR0qh2Q

Super structure of Mahaday Weyne bridge, located about 30 km upstream of Jowhar

The road system north of Mahady Weyne – showing the east-west divide

Buuloburte – Mogadishu: specifics of each checkpoint

Buuloburte – Mogadishu	
Mukayle	
Location	Mukayle village, 40km west of Buuloburte
District/Region	Buuloburte/Hiran
Who controls it?	AS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdi-Aziz Durow Abdi
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey

Ceelware	
Location	Ceelware village, 35km west of Buuloburte
District/Region	Buuloburte/Hiran
Who controls it	AS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdi-Aziz Durow Abdi
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey

Moqakori	
Location	120 km SW of Buuloburte
District/Region	Buuloburte/Hiran
Who controls it?	AS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdi-Aziz Durow Abdi
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Tawane Ahmed Gurey

Jowhar to Mogadishu	
Jameecojilyaale/Darusalaam	
Location	Darusalaam 40 km SW of Jowhar
District/Region	Jowhar/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	AS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdulkadir Ali Mohamed (Buufuule)
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Afaraf Tata	
Location	Afaraf Tarta
District/Region	Jowhar/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	Clan-militia
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdulkadir Ali Mohamed (Buufuule)
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Koongo	
Location	Jowhar: the capital town of the Middle Shabelle Region. The town lies along a major road 90 km north of Mogadishu. The Italians, who believed in the economic potential of the region, built a railroad system that linked Jowhar to Mogadishu. Jowhar only became the regional capital in the mid-1980s when Mogadishu was taken out of Middle Shabelle to form its own region, Banaadir. There is an airstrip in the north of the town. A large proportion of the road network consists of tracks and trails. Most of the sections are unpaved, only the main road is paved.
District/Region	Jowhar/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner	Abdulkadir Ali Mohamed (Buufuule)
Regional Governor	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Balcad to Mogadishu	
Hiilweyne	
Location	7 km south of Balcad
District/Region	Balcad/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Mohamed Mohamud Saney
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Buundada Balcad	
Location	Balcad town
District/Region	Baclad/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Mohamed Mohamud Saney
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Garsaalo	
Location	15 km north of Balcad
District/Region	Baclad/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Mohamed Mohamud Saney
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Qalimow	
Location	22 km north of Balcad
District/Region	Baclad/Middle Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Mohamed Mohamud Saney
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ali Abdullah Hussein (Gudlaawe)
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Ibrahim Yusuf Nur

Afgoye to Mogadishu

Mukayga

Location	Entrance to Afgooye town
District/Region	Afgoye/Lower Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdgani Yusuf Ahmed
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ibrahim Aden Ali
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Abdullah Ali Warsame

Mogadishu to Afgoye roadway, 2013 – An AMISOM video of road improvements made to 4.2 km of the road between Afgoye and Mogadishu: www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8qo5RGvl7I

Around Mogadishu

Ceelasha Biyaha

Location	13 km from Mogadishu
District/Region	Afgoye/Lower Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdgani Yusuf Ahmed
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ibrahim Aden Ali
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Abdullah Ali Warsame

Excontrol

Location	Entrance to Mogadishu
District/Region	Afgoye/Lower Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdgani Yusuf Ahmed
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ibrahim Aden Ali
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Abdullah Ali Warsame

Maslax

Location	Outskirts of Mogadishu
District/Region	Afgoye/Lower Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdgani Yusuf Ahmed
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ibrahim Aden Ali
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Abdullah Ali Warsame

Lambar Labbatan

Location	20 km from Mogadishu on a road leading to Balcad
District/Region	Afgoye/Lower Shabelle
Who controls it?	FGS
District Commissioner (if state was in control)	Abdgani Yusuf Ahmed
Regional Governor (if state was in control)	Ibrahim Aden Ali
Military Commander (if state was in control)	Col. Abdullah Ali Warsame

Implementation and Analysis in Action of Accountability Programme (IAAAP) is a four-year UK Aid-funded programme aiming to generate and promote a robust evidence base that will inform, influence and support a broad range of Somali and international actors to hold government more accountable.

MOTT MACDONALD

Transparency Solutions

IAAAP
Somalia Accountability Programme

UKaid
from the British people