Causes of the Somali Civil War 1991

By

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Abstract

The Somali people represent a unique fabric of homogeneity, but it suffered from political instability in the late eighties as a result of the outbreak of civil wars in Somalia and the spread of chaos in the country until the situation reached the outbreak of fierce wars between the tribes as a result of the fleeing of the constructive ruler outside the country, as the conflict began to spread between the movements The opposition that removed the regime, and they cared about the seats and power, and this led to the dismantling of Somalia and its entry into wars that lasted for many years, so each of them was running after his personal ambitions and his desire to monopolize the rule and power for him and his tribe.

Keywords: civil wars, Somalia, Horn of Africa

Introduction

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa, and this site is considered essential in the formation of the power of the state, as this site left grave effects on local societies, including wars and strife. This was the distinguishing characteristic of the peoples of Africa in general and Somalia in particular. For Somalia to enter into endless wars as a result of the effects, causes and gaps left by the liberation movements and the beneficiary regimes and their leaders, which made it a mosaic of strife and wars, so we find a country that entered within this scope.

First: Terminology and definitions related to civil wars

The phenomenon of civil war witnessed remarkable interest from politicians and intellectuals in the early nineties, for several considerations, not the last of which was the end of the Cold War, and the accompanying tangible increase in civil wars around the world. Al-Ahlia is different from the aforementioned forms of conflict, as it is more comprehensive than it in various aspects, and it can be considered an armed political struggle that aims to make radical changes in the foundations of the regimes that emerge from it, and lead to tangible changes in the infrastructure of their countries, negatively or positively, depending on the type of those wars and the goals and capabilities of their leaders. The civil war, both organizationally and practically, adopts regular military principles [1]. As for the methods of guerrilla warfare, it can be adopted by the parties to civil wars in the early stages of their conflicts, due to their lack of expertise and capabilities necessary to wage regular wars, which leads to their focus on skirmishes and qualitative operations, and the adoption of tactics commensurate with the strength of the enemy, its armament, the topography of the battlefield, and the military and political conditions, but the accumulation of experience and the desire to fight Enacting change is gradually pushing the parties to the civil war to quote the principles

of regular war as the best solution to destroy the enemy and achieve political and military goals [1], on the basis that the parties to the civil war often have different ideologies and goals with equal or convergence in material capabilities that are often funded by external parties for various reasons, while the revolution is a rapid change in the structure of the existing political power within the state, a radical social and political change takes place by mobilizing popular support directed against governments [2].

There were several definitions of civil wars, including what was mentioned by Theed Robert Jarre within the framework of his study on minorities in the world, where he counted civil wars as one of the forms of revolution carried out by the group in order to achieve its interests, and in which popular forces are formed to fight organized military units supporting the ruling regime, and hostile groups launch For the forces of the ruling regime, from certain areas that constitute their headquarters, focal points, and starting points in their operations seeking to overthrow the regime, and to make radical changes later [3], as for the American researcher Roy Laked, he criticized the traditional definition of civil wars, describing it as a type of large-scale violence between disparate groups in one sovereign state recognized by the international community. From his point of view, civil war also includes large-scale violence, mutual killing, street crimes and war [3], another definition of civil war is that it is a type of internal war and another aspect of a guerrilla war had it not been for the participation of some civilians in it [4]. We see that there is a definition more applicable to civil wars, especially in Somalia, the focus of our study, which it is an armed conflict within the territory of one country between one or more parties waged against the regime to seize power in the country or one of its regions, while the regime works to preserve its previous gains, which It ends with debates between opposition figures and the authority, with logistical support from external parties, without direct participation in the war [5].

Second: Preliminaries and causes of the Somali civil war:
The country entered the stage of a multi-party democratic system after it gained its independence in 1960, which was evident in the participation of (88) Somali parties in the first elections after independence, but this number indicated the existence of many currents, trends and divisions, most of which are based on tribal affiliations and affiliations, relying on concepts that contradict each other. With the foundations and constants of the civil state, it is remarkable that there were no specific programs or specific intellectual or ideological orientations for most of these parties, with the exception of tribal fanaticism or the service of some foreign agendas, so the interest of most Somali parties focused on narrow interests or tribal loyalties [6]. Somalia, a decade after its independence, included nearly one hundred political parties, more than seventy of which had a tribal basis, and the remainder had a religious basis, with the exception of a few that adopted the patriotic standpoint as a platform and a program for it. The lack of experience with the elements of the ruling regime in Somalia and the prevalence of tribalism, ignorance and poverty among the groups of people formed an additional dimension to weaken the structure of the Somali regime and fuel conflict in all its forms between its parties and between it and the rest of the groups of the people [7]. It seems that the tribal institution tried to fill the vacuum resulting from the weakness of governmental institutions, so tribal influence became the main factor according to which ministerial portfolios and high positions were distributed. The Somalis did not see the regime's interest in them and its keenness on their interests [8], the assassination of Sharmarke was the first nucleus to ignite the fuse of the civil war in Somalia because it led to the transfer of power from the elite of the Mujartein tribe to the elite of the Darwinian tribe represented by Siad Barre and his relatives, so the Somali government neglected the investigation into Sharmarke's assassination, and the state's apparatus, intelligence and army

were used to suppress any voice Opponents of the new regime, which created the conditions for strife and feuds among the tribes of Somalia [9].

There is no doubt that the first uprising in the Somali north in May 1988 was the most prominent Somali crisis that threatened the stability of the country and paved the way for the country to plunge into civil war, especially since the people of northern Somalia belonging to the large Ishaq tribe and small tribes resented the marginalization of the Siad Barre regime for them and resented the monopoly of power by the southern tribes. Especially the Marihan clan belonging to the Daroud tribe [10]. The international changes added a pressing dimension to the course of the Somali conflict in light of the Soviet Union distancing itself from interfering in the Horn of Africa due to the weakness of President Mikhail Gorbachev and his preoccupation with the political and economic crises that brought the Soviets out of the equation of the two poles. The situation in Somalia has not addressed the causes and motives of the conflict, except for its call on the various Somali parties to restrain themselves and to participate in a government with a national spectrum [11], However, the different Somali parties responded to this call, which was associated with the claim of the Siad Barre regime of its intention to carry out comprehensive political reform. In August 1989, the opposition parties announced their intention to participate in the elections of the end of 1990, especially after President Siad Barre confirmed that he would not interfere in their course and respect their results, whatever they were, even if he led. This led to his relinquishment of power, and although President Siad Barre allowed the establishment of new Somali parties, they were a reflection of the Somali tribal map and the embodiment of clan divisions, adding a political dimension to them [12]. Here, it is necessary to draw attention to the diversity of the reasons that led to the occurrence of the civil war in Somalia, some of which are due to internal data and secretions, while others are caused by regional and international interactions and attractions the most important internal reasons are:

A-   The colonial legacy:

The work of the European colonialists to perpetuate the mental system through the use of sheikhs and tribal leaders as tools to implement their policies by granting them broad powers in the police and courts, which led to the establishment of a class tribal system, was also embodied in the colonial legacy in tearing Somalia into five parts (Kenyan, British, Italian, French and Ethiopian) with the aim of obliterating the Arab national identity of Somalia [13].

B- Political reasons, which can be summarized as follows:

- The failure of the parliamentary experiment between 1960-1961 as a result of the narrow horizons of the political leaders who came to power after independence and their lack of expression of a method or ideology, and the transformation of their positions into a source of livelihood.
- The struggle for power and positions between the various factions. The goal of these factions is no longer to oppose the dictatorship. Rather, the monopoly of power has become the goal of every Somali front, faction, or current [14].
- Siad Barre's monopoly on dictatorial power and his adoption of a one-party system with his inability to control all the regions of the state, not to mention the freezing of political activity in the country and the adoption of radical plans to transform Somalia from an Islamic country into a socialist state [15].
- The politicization of the military establishment, the withdrawal of its national and national identity, and its transformation into a guard for the interests of the ruling party and its leaders, as well as the tribal fanaticism of the civilian leaders and

military [16].

- Muhammad Siad Barre's exclusion of the northern Somalis from his government and their deprivation of political and economic privileges ended with the erosion of the national dimension of his regime, and the institutions of governance and administration excluded it from popular participation [17].

C- Economic reasons:

- The deterioration of the economic situation and the almost complete paralysis of the developmental and productive institutions due to the mismanagement associated with the drought that ravaged the country repeatedly and the wars of attrition that afflicted the country from the armed opposition that took the lands of neighboring countries as its base, coinciding with the large expenditures of the Somali military institution that wasted the country's resources and prevented financing Development projects in it, and the private sectors were marginalized with the government's seizure of agricultural products at low prices that do not even cover the cost of production [18].
- The concentration of government investments and services in certain areas has created a kind of extended social conflict where corruption and looting have become political and social behaviors for most of the Somali social components [19].
- Somalia is the poorest country in the world according to the United Nations standards of poverty, and the psychological factor represented by the poverty of the environment and the successive waves of drought have an impact on that, so the modest attempts of the regime in the early nineties failed to rebuild a strong economy and remove economic disparities because the solutions required resources and wealth that Somalia lacked [20].

D- Social reasons:

Although Somalia enjoyed almost complete ethnic, religious and linguistic unity, it suffered from severe divisions, caused by the presence of major tribes that contributed to the fragmentation of Somalia, coupled with a narrow-minded approach adopted by the ruling classes when they adopted tribal ties as a weapon to influence the people and gain their loyalty and support. The Somali regime did not adopt a nationalist ideology. There is no doubt that the Somali traditions related to the patriarchal system on which the society relied were born of domination from the father all the way to the leader of the tribe, to whom everyone had to obey and even submit [21].

The most important external reasons for the outbreak of the Somali civil war were as follows:

1. The weakness of Somalia's relations with its neighbors, as the state of Somalia, began its political path after its independence by antagonizing its regional surroundings represented in (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti) because of its demands for parts of the territories of the first two countries, and the entire territory of the third country as parts of the Somali homeland, which involved Somalia in confrontations with Those countries reached a comprehensive and devastating war with Ethiopia, exhausting the country and draining its meagre capabilities [22].

2. The dependence of Somalis on foreign aid from some regimes and their children working abroad has made the Somali economy fragile, especially after the reluctance of the people of the cities to graze sheep and cattle and their dependence mainly on the financial transfers of their children abroad, just as the ruling regime itself relied on financing many of its projects on Limited, sporadic and unsecured foreign aid,

which negatively affected the infrastructure of the State of Somalia [23].

3. The negative repercussions of the changes of the international system since the late eighties on the Somali regime and its deprivation of the opportunity for international polarization from the Cold War parties, and the consequent scarcity of resources and assistance that Somalia obtained from those parties after the end of the incoming war, and to learn more about the impact of the end of the war It is enough for us to know that the Somali regime headed since the early sixties towards the eastern camp and signed an agreement with the Soviet Union in 1961 according to which the Somali army was built and began supplying it with weapons starting in 1963, and Somalia's dependence on the Soviets increased after the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and cooperation with them in 1974 [24], and the army became In the aftermath, the Somali army was the strongest in the Horn of Africa, which tempted the Somali ruling regime to move militarily to restore the Ogaden region, but the Soviets directed their support to Ethiopia after announcing its intention to adopt socialism and walk in the orbit of the Soviet Union [25].

4. The United States of America, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was alone in the countries of the Horn of Africa and arranged its priorities according to its strategic interests, and the observer of the American role notes its interest in Ethiopia and Djibouti at the expense of Somalia, and here we warn that the American intervention in Somalia in the last half of 1992 resulted from the attempt of the United States to display its strength And its control over the new world order, without caring about Somalia and its interests [26].

Conclusion

The repercussions of the Somali civil war did not stop at the borders of the territory of the Somali state, but rather those effects were reflected at the regional and international levels as well, as new dimensions were added to the Somali crisis, and the difficulties and complications increased, in addition to the military setback, as it created a major problem and an internal political crisis, and the morale of the Somali people declined quickly. The operation of the system, and Somalia entered into confrontations that reached an all-out war, as the country was exhausted, and its capabilities depleted until Somalia reached endless wars that are still continuing to this day with continuation of conflicts and wars and many problems with the loss of the language of dialogue, negotiation and unification to help establish security and safety in the country.

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