

# **Kismayu: Peering through Historical Lenses**

## **Part I**

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June 23, 2013

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### **Introduction**

*In this series, the History of Jubaland and the City of Kismayu a wide range of empirical evidences derived from various databases such as National Archives in London will form a solid basis for the series. Also a comprehensive collection of historical documents; books and facts will be presented. The aim being the facts presented here will contribute to the better understanding of the history of Jubaland and its citizens.*

*Moreover, the series will make an effort in explaining as to why certain clans in this region yearn for the formation of a regional government. Debunking the immense propaganda directed at the rightful owners of Jubaland will be the central theme of the series.*

*Speaking of propaganda, new research suggests that misinformed people rarely change their minds when presented with the facts — and often become even more attached to their beliefs.*

*But before the ancient and contemporary history of Jubaland is presented, I will take you through the Somali governments stand and policy towards Jubaland . Besides, this series will reveal and expose the Somali government's techniques, tactics and approaches aimed at extricating Jubaland State.*

*Finally, the series will present the grievances of Jubalanders on hosts of issues.*

## Why is the History of Jubaland and Kismayo Relevant Now?

I was made aware of the overall deficiency of historical facts regarding the area under discussion by a number of journalists, analysts, academicians and readers alike. Dozens or so readers who had read my previous article entitled: *Kismayu, Kenyans and Kinship*, pointed it out as well, thus it would have been helpful for readers to position themselves had they been furnished with some sort of historical evidence.

Secondly, I would like to highlight a number of historical facts that are unknown to many Somalis. In that regard if I may borrow the notorious funny quote by Donald Rumsfeld former US Secretary of Defence during the Iraqi War: *Unknown Knowns* :

*There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know.*

Hence, unravelling Jubaland's unknown knowns are crucial because we are on a regular basis bombarded with disinformation, half-truths and manufactured history by journalists, politicians and laymen for various reasons, clan affiliation or personal interest.

By the same token, I was compelled to go through tons of materials with a fine-tooth comb at the British and Italian colonial archives that have a lot of material on the subject matter under discussion so that all unknown knowns are impartially illuminated rather than the usual clannish fairytales *Wheelchair Warriors/Fadhi kudirir Generals* sell to us day in and day out.

Also, it is imperative that for those in power in society to have control over the way the past is understood and constructed, for it is the understanding of the past that people relate to their social order. It is from past experiences that people act in the present. Enlightening the history of the people of Jubaland has never been relevant than today and also for the sake of the younger generations and those who do not have ample information about Jubaland.

## Clan- Politics

Apparently, most Somalis have taken sides on Jubaland issue from the level of local villages up to the top brass of the government. There is so much dirt that is going on at all levels, the existing evidences to substantiate the rightful owners of Kismayu and Jubaland is depicted by the reality on the ground in Jubaland and by the existing historical facts.

It also seems that a clan polarization in Somalia is almost complete and anyone who thinks independently or out of the clan psychological mindset/closet is perceived as an idealist. Perhaps historical facts could be used for reconciliation and greater understanding and for the creation of peace and harmony.

Somalia at this time and stage needs genuine reconciliation and not war. We all know the effects of war and we do not need any lectures about it. However, I couldn't resist putting forward Paul Collier's assessment on civil wars. Paul is Professor of Economics, Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford; he has extensively written on civil wars and he views civil wars regardless of their motivations, as usually ruinous and that war is development in reverse. He goes on to maintain that civil war powerfully retards development; and equally, failures in development substantially increase proneness to civil war.

Sadly, Somalis haven't learned from more than 20 years of turmoil, obliteration and lost generations. As a matter of fact the vast majority of Somalis had high hopes and great expectation when the transition period ended. However, that anticipation waned down as a result of the political standoff between Jubaland State and the Central Government that has been ongoing for the last eight months.

As I am writing this piece a war has erupted in Kismayu and regrettably the Somali Defence Minister who was present in Kismayu at that time blamed the Ras Kiamboni fighters for all sorts of things and used harsh words through the media. The Minister didn't apply any

reconciliatory tone at all. I can understand the Minister's frustration, for being powerless in Kismayu, but an official of that rank and calibre should display tolerance and professionalism well knowing Somalia is still violent, volatile and clan ridden society.

## **Seeing the World through Jubaland State Glasses**

The opponents of the Defence Minister and the Central Government are using harsh words as well, they accuse him/them of orchestrating a policy of divide and rule on the clans residing in Kismayo. They allege the Minister is actively arming and recruiting Al-shabab remnants.

These opponents continue to state the Minister is instigating war, chaos, death and destruction. Personally, I lost a close relative; a cousin who got hit by a stray bullet while he was at his house and died for nothing.

The Somali Prime Minister has also joined the mêlée and is using hostile words, accusations and counter- accusations are flying up in the air. These accusations and counter- accusations are likely to undermine the relations between the involved parties and the existence of healthy debate.

According to my sources who are well informed and professional political commentators, the Defence Minister is currently undertaking a well-crafted political scheme aimed at harnessing distrust among the major clans in Jubaland. According to these sources the government's plan is to dismember Jubaland, in doing so, Gedo will be wiped off the map of Jubaland and will be forced to join Baay Region.

These sources, go on to postulate that Ahmed Madoobe's group which fully controls Kismayo does not feel threatened in any way, form or shape by this divide and rule game, simply because the group enjoys the support of all major and minor clans in Jubaland.

In addition, Fartaag the Vice – President of Jubaland has the blessing of his clan chiefs and the approval of other key politicians. The Madoobe group argue that they have already

formed their regional government and they are not backtracking on Jubaland State come rain or shine.

According to these sources, the formation of Jubaland Statehood took more than four years of consultations coupled with millions of dollars that was thrown at it not to mention the immense human sacrifice suffered by Ras Kiambonis and their allies. This is similar to cuckoo behaviour. A cuckoo does not make a nest of its own, and they do not bring up their own young. Instead, the female lays her eggs in the nests of other birds. The Jubaland State compares the Somali government's behaviour to that of a cuckoo.

Jubaland State leaders highly doubt that the Somali Government is frank about the so called peace mission and its initiative to liberate Jubaland from Al Shabab (Alshaydaan). They for example cite the Defence Minister's recent interview with Aljazeera English service when the fighting erupted in Kismayu. The Minister's approach and attitude toward Jubaland leaders was hostile. His tone was harsh and callous. The people of Kismayu felt the Minister was adding insult to injury and his behaviour damaged his reputation in Jubaland beyond repair.

The Minister claimed in another interview he gave to BBC Somali Service about starvation in Kismayu regarding some families who economically depended on telecommunication businesses, after all communications were cut off by Jubaland State during the fighting. If this was the case, why the Minister fail to send food from the overstocked WFP warehouses in Mogadishu to these *imagined* families?

Most Somali political analysts will tell you that the Somali army units and Ras Kiambonis based in Kismayu have been ignored and neglected by the government for so long on issues such as equipment; training, salary, and basic needs before and after Al Shabab (Alshaydaan) were kicked out of Kismayu. The government's interest on the region increased only when it became apparent that Jubaland State was in an instance act of hatching.

Finally, these analysts allege the Jubaland leaders are puzzled about the central government's failure to liberate Buulo-Mareer and Brava which happen to be Al Shabab's biggest dens in the country, instead of wasting time, energy and resources unnecessarily on a region which has been liberated already by the locals. *Charity begins at home.*

Various independent media outlets have independently verified the severe shortage of medicine at Kismayu General Hospital, while hospitals elsewhere in the country have either oversupply or ample medical stocks. The region lags behind when it comes to the relief aid worth millions of dollars that has been flooding into Somalia day in and day out.

Jubaland's economic problems are visible on the main streets of towns and villages in the whole region; even though Jubaland is one of the richest if not the richest region in Somalia, dilapidated buildings and massive poverty are visible everywhere.

The education sector in Jubaland has been neglected too. Most analysts have proven beyond any shadow of doubt the strong co-relation between low education and conflicts. They argue conflicts are concentrated in countries with little education. Sadly, this has been the case in Jubaland for over 20 years. According to Paul Collier a country which has ten percentage points more of its youths in schools- say 55% instead of 45% - cuts its risk of conflict from 14% to around 10%.

### **Techniques and Tactics used by the Somali Government on Jubaland.**

For those of you who are familiar with Money Laundering stages or work in the Financial Services Sector please, do allow me to draw on the below mentioned techniques used by money launderers. The tactics used by the Somali Government in Jubaland are ironically indicative of the three stages of Money Laundering techniques namely: **placement, layering and integration.**

## A) PLACEMENT

The first stage is the washing circle itself, i.e. the cash from illegal activities from for example drugs are placed into the financial system or are smuggled out of the country and are then transformed into travellers cheques, postal orders etc.

The second stage is what is known as Layering:

## B) LAYERING

This is the first attempt at concealment or disguise of the source of the ownership of the funds through creation of complex layers of financial transactions designed to disguise the audit trail and provide anonymity.

Typically, layers are created by moving monies in and out of the offshore bank accounts of bearer share shell companies through electronic funds' transfer (**EFT**).

The last stage is what is known as:

## C) INTEGRATION

This is the final stage in the process. It is this stage at which the money is integrated into the legitimate economic and financial system and is assimilated with all other assets in the system.

Integration of the "cleaned" money into the economy: by this stage, it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish legal and illegal wealth.

With regards to **placement** the Somali Government has been reinforcing the existing government troops in Kismayu as soon the Jubaland State was declared. Prior to the inception of Jubaland State, the Somali Government was unable to carry out its placement plans on time, due to logistical problems as well as the reality on the ground in Kismayu.

But when the placement couldn't proceed according to plan and when the going got tough the Somali President directly pointed the finger of blame on the Kenyan AMISOM contingent based in Kismayu. In addition, the President went on the offensive and claimed the Kenyan's misbehaved. When the nature of this blunder became apparent, the government changed gear and resorted into non-Kenyan AMISOM placement. A contingent from Sierra Leone was rapidly flown to Kismayu, by doing this the placement stage was partially complete.

On **layering** the government sent army units disguised as civilians into Kismayu. These men were mainly made up of clans that are making claims into the ownership of Jubaland, and as a result of this, Jubaland State officials had trouble distinguishing civilians from government troops and vice versa. In the same way, the government aided and abetted fake Jubaland presidents. This is a way of concealing the truth on the ground through the creation of fictional Presidents, and this is layering.

Regarding the **Integration** the above mentioned smuggled clan troops into Jubaland were integrated into the national army battalions that are based in Kismayu at a fast pace.

According to some analysts the Somali government is **planning** to gradually increase its troops in Kismayu until Jubaland troops are outnumbered.

If that fails to materialize the other plan is to amalgamate Ras Kiambonis into the Somali National Army with the aim of sending them to the frontlines in Jubaland or elsewhere. Once that is done, Jubaland troops will be replaced by non-Jubaland troops. Resultantly Ras Kiambonis will be forcefully disbanded and branded as 'TERRORISTS'.

## **The Failed Nairobi Talks**

The Somali President who was in Nairobi recently, met with both President Farole of Puntland and President Madoobe of Jubaland. However, these talks broke down after Farole and Madobe rejected President Hassan's proposals and policy toward Jubaland.



This chess game is getting interesting by the hour, it has a clannish fingerprints and wider political and security ramifications. So far, in the last 48 hours more than 30 people mostly civilians lost their lives in Kismayu. How many more have to die before the Somali Government acknowledges the will of the people in Jubaland?

## **President Farole Vs President Hassan**

**Francis Fukoyoma:** *The end of History* vs **Huntington:** *The Clash of civilization*

For those of you who are familiar with Francis Fukuyama's article "*The End of History*", you will recall where he claimed that we are headed towards a universalist civilization, and praised Liberal Democracy, while on the other hand in contrast, Samuel P. Huntington, defended the opposite view in his article "*The Clash of Civilizations?*", that he wrote in response to Fukuyama's post.

Fukuyama's point of view was gone with the wind after 11 September 2001. The attack on the World Trade Centre was viewed by some as a fulfilment of Samuel P. Huntington's theory. However, the most famous criticism is Huntington's simplistic explanation, while proponents highlighted his prediction of 11 September, 2001.

Similar to these two books and opposing views, President Farole and President Hassan each represent opposing views and that of their kinsmen regarding hosts of issues.

If I may start with President Farole's viewpoint, politically, his central argument revolves around Federalism and devolution of power, in other words a form of decentralisation. According to Farole devolved territories must be given the power to make legislation relevant to their area.

Farole's main argument being the Somali civil war created enormous suffering, loss of assets, immense distrust and changed the demography of Somalia for good, the only way forward for

Somalis is Federalism, whereby each clan/clans with similar interest as it is stipulated by the provisional constitution, must be allowed to form a regional government of their choice since. No concrete reconciliation has ever been undertaken in Somalia, and the mistrust that exists is much deeper than the artificial pictures most politicians are capable of displaying at home and abroad.

On the other hand, President Hassan and his Diaspora fans as well his supporters in his stronghold of Mogadishu, do not entertain the idea of Federalism, as it will weaken their authority, grip on power and control of resources in connection with Mogadishu being the capital city of Somalia. In other words, they are for centralisation of power. They view the constitution as an obstacle and they have unilaterally amended a couple of articles that they didn't like. However, when Farole inquired about these illegal amendments, he was told the constitution was provisional anyway and he was told to buzz off.

According to President Hassan's supporters' viewpoints, demographically speaking, Somaliland is already out of their reach while Puntland has been autonomous region for many years and if Jubaland becomes autonomous (*Xaa soo Haraa*), there won't be much left for them to govern. These are the battles that are being fought across the capitals of the world. Each side is waiting to humiliate to the losing side.

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