

Betrayed by Leadership: How President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's Corruption, Incompetence, and Neglect Endanger Somali Soldiers

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In the early hours of a somber morning, the tranquil El-Dher district of the Galgaduud region was shattered by an audacious attack on the Somali National Army (SNA). Al-Shabaab struck with impunity, leaving behind a trail of devastation and underscoring the dire state of security in Somalia. This attack is not merely a failure of the military; it is a glaring indictment of President Mohamud and the political leadership that has consistently failed the Somali people and their defenders.

Why were these soldiers left at that base without adequate protection?

This question must be directed squarely at President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and the leadership of both houses of the parliament. Their incompetence and neglect have left the security forces demoralized, under-resourced, and incapable of effectively countering the ever-present threat of malignant insurgency. The federal government's current tenure has been marred by insecurity and corruption.

Their inability to foster political unity and instill a sense of purpose has plunged the nation into a state of political chaos, a failure squarely attributable to both the government and the parliament. This lack of cohesive leadership, marked by infighting and power struggles, has led to a fragmented federal government, with various factions vying for influence, creating an environment of instability and uncertainty. The Somali National Army and the country's security forces are left without clear direction or support, severely undermining their ability to effectively counter the ongoing insurgency.



El-Dher Somali National Army base in Galgaduud region, overrun by Al Shabab militia

This political disarray, driven by the government's and parliament's failure to act in unison, has not only hampered efforts to combat Al-Shabaab but has also eroded public trust in the government's capacity

to maintain national security. The absence of unity and purpose at the highest levels of government has, therefore, become a significant barrier to achieving peace and stability in Somalia. The Somali people deserve leaders who prioritize the nation's well-being over personal and political gain, and until this is achieved, the country will remain mired in conflict and chaos.

Over the past two years, there have been over a dozen major attacks on military bases and outposts, resulting in hundreds of casualties. These incidents include the devastating assault on the El-Dher district, as well as attacks in Banadir, Hirshabelle, and Galmudug, highlighting a widespread pattern of vulnerability and lack of preparedness. The soldiers are left adrift, battling an insurgency with no clear vision, direction, or support. Soldiers are often left without proper equipment, intelligence, or reinforcements, forcing them to defend their positions under untenable conditions. This lack of strategic direction not only endangers the lives of the soldiers but also undermines the stability of the nation.

It is imperative that these critical failures are addressed immediately. The Somali people deserve a government that prioritizes their safety and invests in building competent and well-resourced security forces. Immediate reforms and accountability measures must be implemented to restore confidence in the government's ability to protect its citizens and maintain security.

Wasteful Travels

Furthermore, President Mohamud has spent an inordinate amount of time traveling abroad, neglecting the urgent needs of the Somali security forces. These frequent trips, often under the guise of diplomatic missions, have drained precious resources that could have been better utilized to support the security forces. [The funds wasted on these unnecessary travels,](#) estimated to be in the tens of millions of dollars, could have significantly bolstered the security and military's capabilities, providing better equipment, training, and support for the soldiers.

The president's absence from critical issues has left a leadership vacuum, further exacerbating the challenges faced by the Somali National Army and demoralizing both military personnel and civilians who rely on their protection.



President Hassan arrives at Oslo, Norway, for a 3 day trip

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's trip to Oslo, Norway, to attend a conference of no significant importance, is a glaring example of his misplaced priorities. ***This disgraceful and insensitive trip took place just days after soldiers were killed by terrorists in El-Dher.*** Neither President Mohamud nor Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre addressed the tragedy; they did not visit the families of the fallen soldiers, nor did they hold meetings to review the incident and develop strategies to counter Al-Shabaab. Instead, President Mohamud embarked on a trip to Oslo, costing taxpayers almost \$1 million.

Moreover, President Mohamud made five trips to Nairobi, Kenya, in one month, each trip estimated to have cost about \$500,000. Similarly, Prime Minister Barre traveled to South Korea to attend the South Korea Africa Summit, with reports indicating that this trip cost \$500,000. These extravagant spending on unnecessary travels highlight a blatant disregard for the urgent needs of the Somali people and the dire situation of the security forces, which continues to suffer from inadequate support and resources.

The root cause of this leadership failure lies in President Mohamud. The current security leadership and structure are incompetent and corrupt, having been selected over more qualified candidates due to their personal ties to the president. This practice has not only undermined the effectiveness of the army and police forces but has also demoralized capable officers who are sidelined despite their qualifications. The lack of competent leadership and the misuse of resources highlight the urgent need for accountability and comprehensive reforms to restore the integrity and effectiveness of Somalia's security forces.

Call for Financial Audit of Somali Leadership

An immediate and thorough audit must be conducted on the finances of **President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Speaker of the Parliament Ahmed Madobe, Minister of Defense Abdulqadir Mohamed Nur "Jama," and Chief of Defense Forces Ibrahim Sheikh Muhyadin Adow**. There is mounting evidence suggesting that **substantial funds withdrawn from government accounts** under the **guise of travel expenses are part of a widespread graft scheme**. These funds, ostensibly allocated for official travel, are unaccounted for, with only a fraction being spent on legitimate expenses. The remainder is reportedly **being funneled into foreign bank accounts in Kenya, Türkiye, and Djibouti**, significantly undermining the nation's financial integrity.

Alarming, these misappropriated funds include UN, U.S., EU, and UK Security and Defense assistance, as well as contributions from the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Africa Development Bank (AFDB), which are intended to support security, military, and humanitarian assistance. This blatant misuse of public resources not only deprives the Somali National Army of crucial support but also erodes public trust in the government. An independent audit is essential to uncover the extent of this corruption, hold those responsible accountable, and restore financial transparency and integrity within the Somali government.

False Claims and Misinformation

The attacks in the El-Dher district call into question the claims by President Mohamud and his government about the state of affairs of the SNA. President Mohamud's government has been consistently lying about its success against Al-Shabaab. The Somali government's recent assertion that 47 Al-Shabaab militants were killed in a foiled attack in the El-Dher district lacks credibility. According to sources familiar with the matter, the militants overran the base, leaving behind significant loss of life and many soldiers missing.

The Ministry of Information has become the hub for fake news, lacking credibility at home or with international community partners. The majority of information the ministry publishes is false. The deputy minister of information, Abdirahman Al-Caadaala, has been a chief propagandist, fudging casualty numbers and spreading false narratives, messages, and content about the government's

achievements. For instance, official reports frequently claim successful operations and minimal casualties, while independent investigations reveal a far grimmer reality on the ground.

Al-Caadaala, often compared to the infamous Baghdad Bob, has systematically misled the public, further eroding trust in the federal government's capabilities and intentions. Baghdad Bob, whose real name was Mohammed al-Sahhaf, was the Iraqi Information Minister under Saddam Hussein, notorious for his outlandish and blatantly false claims about Iraq's military victories during the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces, despite clear evidence to the contrary.

The continuous dissemination of false information not only undermines the credibility of the government but also demoralizes the troops and the civilian population who rely on truthful reporting to understand their security situation. This pervasive misinformation necessitates independent verification of government claims and greater transparency to restore public trust. The opposition leaders and international community must insist on accountability and accurate reporting as a condition for continued support.

Abdication of Responsibility by Somali Parliament

The federal parliament, particularly the leadership of the Lower House and the Senate, has abjectly failed in its constitutional duty to provide oversight and hold the government accountable. **The Speaker of the House, who should be spearheading efforts to scrutinize the executive branch, has instead been vacationing in Türkiye and Kenya.** This gross misuse of public funds, **estimated in the millions of dollars**, comes at a time when Somali soldiers are going hungry and lack basic necessities. Such irresponsible behavior underscores a deep-seated corruption and a blatant disregard for the dire needs of the nation's security forces.

Where is the Senate leadership in this time of crisis? Their conspicuous absence from the pressing issues facing Somalia raises serious questions about their legitimacy and commitment to their roles. Instead of championing the cause of transparency and accountability, the Senate has become entangled in the same web of corruption. This abdication of moral and constitutional responsibilities by both houses of Parliament has left a vacuum in governance, exacerbating the crisis and further demoralizing the security forces. The people deserve leaders who prioritize their welfare over personal gain and who are committed to genuine reform, transparency, and accountability.

Systematic Corruption and Operational Failures

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, tasked with the critical role of developing and executing government policy and ensuring stability, has similarly failed to rise to the occasion. His administration has been plagued by corruption and inefficiency, with funds meant for military enhancement often disappearing into the abyss of graft. This endemic corruption has sapped the morale of the troops and left them ill-equipped to face well-armed and motivated adversaries. Testimonies from soldiers reveal a bleak picture of unpaid salaries, inadequate equipment, ammunition, food, and lack of basic supplies.

The situation is further exacerbated by the leadership of the Chief of Somali Defense Forces.

The SNA leadership is ineffective and corrupt in addressing the critical needs of the soldiers. The failures in the El-Dher district demonstrate a lack of preparedness and strategic foresight that can no longer be tolerated. It is imperative that the SNA leadership be fired to pave the way for more competent leadership within the defense forces.

The repercussions of this leadership failure extend beyond the immediate loss of life and territory. They erode the confidence of the Somali people in their government's ability to protect them. Every attack that goes unanswered, every village that falls to insurgents, reinforces a narrative of a failed state incapable of safeguarding its citizens. It is clear that Somalia is neither politically nor militarily ready to take on full security responsibilities, and President Mohamud's claims and efforts are nothing more than grandstanding.

International Community's Role

The international community, which has invested significantly in the stabilization of Somalia, must recognize that the very leaders they support are undermining these efforts. It is time for a candid reassessment of Somalia's political leadership and its role in perpetuating the cycle of corruption, violence, and instability. President Mohamud must be held accountable for his failings. His inability to provide leadership and his corruption have left Somalia vulnerable. It is imperative that he either takes decisive steps to rectify the situation or steps aside in favor of leaders who can.

Conclusion

The attack in El-Dher should serve as a wake-up call. The people deserve better than a government that consistently fails to protect them. It is time for a new era of leadership—one that prioritizes the security and well-being of its citizens over political and personal gain. Only then can we hope to break free from the shackles of insurgency and insecurity and build a future of peace and stability.

The soldiers abandoned at that base without protection are not just victims of militant aggression; they are victims of their own government's apathy and corruption. The blood of these brave soldiers is on the hands of Villa Somalia and the parliament, which have consistently failed to provide the necessary leadership and resources to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the Somali National Army. This neglect is not an isolated incident but a symptom of a broader systemic failure.

Repeatedly, funds intended for military enhancement have disappeared into the abyss of graft, leaving soldiers without adequate weapons, training, or even basic supplies. These people, who have sworn to protect their country, are left to fend for themselves against a well-armed and relentless enemy. The failure to equip and support them properly is not just a logistical oversight but a moral failing that speaks to the heart of the leadership crisis in Somalia. Moreover, the lack of accountability in how military resources are allocated and spent has further eroded the trust of the troops and the public. The parliament, whose role is to provide oversight and ensure the executive branch is held accountable, has abdicated its responsibilities. Instead of demanding answers and driving reforms, they have allowed this cycle of corruption and incompetence to continue unabated.

The impact of this failure extends beyond the immediate loss of life. It undermines the morale of the troops, weakens the overall security of the nation, and emboldens insurgent groups like Al-Shabaab. The Somali people deserve leaders who prioritize their safety and well-being, not those who squander precious resources on personal luxuries and unnecessary travels.

It is imperative that the government takes immediate action to rectify these issues. This includes a thorough audit of military spending, the implementation of stringent anti-corruption measures, and the establishment of a transparent and accountable system for resource allocation. The sacrifices of Somali

soldiers must not be in vain. The leadership must rise to the occasion and fulfill their constitutional and moral obligations to protect and empower the nation's defenders.

As we mourn the loss of those who perished in El-Dher, we must also demand accountability and change. **The Somali people, and indeed the world, are watching.** How many more attacks, how many more deaths, will it take for our leaders to take responsibility and act?

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