



SOMALIA: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ARMED CONFLICT IN A FRAGILE STATE

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Pathfinders in Policy and Practice

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OVERVIEW

- Somalia is increasingly being viewed as the poster child of Africa's climate crisis. Climate scientists project that the Horn of Africa will experience **increasingly erratic and volatile climate patterns** in the coming decades, characterised by extreme temperatures and unpredictable cycles of heavy rainfall and flooding, as well as prolonged droughts.
- The impact of climate change on Somalia, consistently ranked the world's **most fragile state for over a decade, is likely to be severe** and disruptive to its socio-economic fabric, with several likely spillover impacts into its endemic insecurity and fragility.
- Al-Shabaab's interactions with climate change are nuanced and complicated. While the jihadist leadership have not explicitly publicised a climate agenda, the group does **weaponise and interact with various elements of Somalia's extreme climate insecurity**, ranging from radicalising former Somali Bantu farmers to deliberately flooding military bases. While Al-Shabaab has a robust humanitarian wing, aided chiefly by Qatar Charity, supporting climate-stressed populations is nearly wholly subordinate to its political and military ambitions.
- The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has adopted aspects of the climate agenda, but primarily as a means of rent-seeking. Considering that Mogadishu **does not exert de facto authority across most of the country, its capacity to respond to climate change has been severely limited** and has been marred by credible allegations of corruption. Further, mounting political divisions between the FGS and some Federal Member States (FMS) limit the prospects of a consistent and sustained national response.
- Somalia is increasingly **emblematic of the complex ways in which the climate crisis aggravates conflict and resource competition**. Understanding the intricate intersection between conflict and climate change is, therefore, crucial for guiding policy responses and actions, as well as informing strategies for effective mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
- To formulate and implement a national climate change action plan, Somalia will need a **national political settlement, improved governance at national and sub-national levels and a reduction in violence**. The prospects of engaging with Al-Shabaab on questions of climate change, meanwhile, are remote at this current juncture.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has become one of the defining challenges of the 21st century, reshaping political, economic, and security landscapes across the globe. Its far-reaching consequences are increasingly recognised for compounding existing vulnerabilities and generating new sources of instability—particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states.¹ Historic issues such as resource competition are being accentuated by diminishing arable land and increasingly unsustainable means of living across significant parts of Africa, which bears a disproportionate burden of the rapidly changing climate

¹ Peters, K., Mayhew, L., Almost, A., Urquhart, P., & Walch, C. (2019). *Double vulnerability: The humanitarian implications of intersecting climate and conflict risk*. Overseas Development Institute.

despite contributing less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions.² Already, the continent loses an estimated 2–5% of its GDP annually to climate-related shocks, with some governments allocating up to 9% of their national budgets to address the impacts of extreme weather events.³ And this is expected to only worsen in the coming decades as the climate emergency intensifies.

Climate change as a ‘threat multiplier’ has gained widespread traction within international policy and security discourse, conceptualising how climate change interacts with existing political, economic and social stressors to further destabilise fragile contexts.⁴ Rarely presenting as a standalone cause of conflict, climate change often exacerbates the structural drivers of fragility by undermining livelihoods, eroding social cohesion and weakening governance systems.⁵ Nowhere are these dynamics more pronounced than in the Horn of Africa, where fragile state institutions and widespread reliance on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism leave communities acutely vulnerable to climate variability.⁶ In such settings, competition over scarce natural resources – particularly water and arable land – has increasingly fuelled both domestic and cross-border conflicts.⁷ Across the region, state contraction driven by political fragmentation and armed conflict is further relegating various governments’ interests in supporting climate-stressed peripheral communities.

Somalia exemplifies the devastating nexus and complex interactions between climate change, state fragility and insecurity. Intensifying climate pressures such as repeated droughts, flash flooding, desertification, land degradation, and river depletion are not only undermining the foundation of rural livelihoods but also driving mass displacement and escalating competition over increasingly scarce natural resources.⁸ Pastoralism– the overwhelming source of employment and the backbone of rural societal structure in Somalia– has been increasingly eviscerated by cyclical climatic shocks.

Despite contributing just 0.03% of global emissions, Somalia is among the countries most exposed to the climate crisis.⁹ Its climate trajectory is increasingly dire, with average temperatures rising by 1–1.5°C since 1991 and projected to climb by up to 4.3°C by the end of the century.¹⁰ These shifts jeopardise agricultural systems that support 83% of the population. Recent memory has borne witness to the intense impact of climate change on Somali communities, with the Horn of Africa wracked by a severe drought over successive failed rainy seasons between 2020 and 2023. In this period, Somalia endured its worst drought in four decades, affecting over 8 million people—more than half the population—and triggering an acute humanitarian crisis.¹¹ But much like the uneven

² African Development Bank. (2022). *Climate change impacts on Africa's economic growth*. African Development Bank Group.

³ UNECA. (2021). *Economic Report on Africa 2021: Transforming African economies for better jobs*. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

⁴ UNECA. (2021). *Economic Report on Africa 2021: Transforming African economies for better jobs*. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

⁵ van Baalen, S., & Mobjörk, M. (2018). Climate change and violent conflict in East Africa: Integrating qualitative and quantitative research to probe the mechanisms. *International Studies Review*, 20(4), 547-575.

⁶ Krampe, F., & Eklöv, K. (2019). *Climate-related security risks and peacebuilding in Somalia* (SIPRI Policy Paper No. 53). Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

⁷ Butler, C. K., & Gates, S. (2012). African range wars: Climate, conflict, and property rights. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(1), 23-34.

⁸ IOM Somalia. (2023). *Climate change complicates Somalia's path to peace*. International Organization for Migration Somalia.

⁹ Norwegian Refugee Council. (2024). *Somalia's climate calamity: a nation adrift*. NRC.

¹⁰ Climate Change Knowledge Portal. (2024). *Somalia - Climatology*. World Bank Group.

¹¹ World Health Organization. (2025). *Evaluating Somalia's humanitarian crisis (2021–2024): Lessons for future action*. WHO.

impact of climate change globally, within Somalia, the burden falls unequally on some of the most impoverished and long-marginalised lower-caste clans and communities in the country.

As a result of endemic insecurity coupled with rising climate pressures, as of 2025, nearly 6 million Somalis require humanitarian assistance, while 4.4 million face crisis-level food insecurity.¹² Many of these individuals live in central-southern Somalia under Al-Shabaab control, and beyond the significant international humanitarian and development assistance that is delivered into the country on an annual basis. In turn, international contributions to developing climate adaptation and ‘resilience’ in Somalia have routinely fed into exclusionary patterns of political patronage and clan-based power dynamics.

Meanwhile, as climate pressures intensify, Al-Shabaab has become an increasingly important intermediary between climate change and its effects on the population. Principal among them is how the jihadist group has adapted to environmental stresses and wielded them to both build influence and enforce alternative governance structures. That does not mean, however, that the jihadist group takes the climate crisis ‘seriously’ or is instrumentalising it in deliberate and strategic ways. The notion of Al-Shabaab as a potential interlocutor in the climate change debate remains extremely premature at this stage.

STATE FRAGILITY AND CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

Since the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s, armed conflict and disputes over natural resources have intensified across much of the country, including in both urban and rural areas. Though clashes between clans predate Somalia's colonial occupation over issues such as arable land, blood feuds, and water, the proliferation of arms alongside major shifts in the political settlement and economy has radically amplified such violence.

In the 1990s and 2000s, better-armed and more dominant clan militias ravaged swathes of rural Somalia, displacing and subjugating lower-caste clans and communities such as the Somali Bantu. Many of the enduring inter-communal conflicts today may be traced to that period. And in the years hence, inter-communal clashes have remained commonplace between pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities competing over resources. Today, historical land claims are often wielded to appropriate contested resources – no matter the authenticity (or otherwise) of such claims. Such dynamics further intersect with issues relating to weak and corrupt governance structures, with local administrations awarding land use and exploitation rights on the basis of graft or nepotism, with the potential to trigger inter-communal conflict.

Meanwhile, many of the traditional clan-based mechanisms for resolving competition over land and resources have been overwhelmed by the scale of the violence since the collapse of the state. The mass distribution and ubiquity of weapons across Somalia have made resource competition far more deadly, complicating the *xeer*-negotiated resolution process. The politicisation of the clan elders’ role has further undermined the ability of neighbouring communities to negotiate settlements. Amidst these interconnected and complex issues, Al-Shabaab has remained an opportunistic actor ready to insert itself to advance its own political and military agenda, displaying an extraordinary adroitness at both appropriating and mediating local grievances.

¹² UN OCHA. (2025, March). [Somalia Monthly Humanitarian Updates – March Update](#)

Meanwhile, in urban areas, prime real estate has become increasingly fought over, partly due to the rapid urbanisation that has transformed the demographics of Somalia's major cities. Climate change, through its impact on traditional livelihoods and increased environmental pressures contributes to Somalia's rapid urbanisation – one of the fastest in the world, with shocks having displaced over 3.8 million people.¹³ The increasingly erratic rainfall patterns such as the 2024 Gu floods and a failed Deyr season highlight the volatility of Somalia's new climate reality.¹⁴ This has disproportionately affected communities such as the pastoralist Rahanweyne and Somali Bantu, pushing them into the peripheries of major cities such as Mogadishu, Beledweyne and Baidoa, where they form a peri-urban underclass that Al-Shabaab has sought to exploit. These lower-caste clans have been repeatedly used as 'humanitarian bait' by more dominant clans in the sprawling IDP camps on the outskirts of Somalia's major cities. Equitable distribution of international aid and development assistance is something of a misnomer in Somalia, undermined by entrenched patronage ecosystems which obscure efforts to address the distribution of humanitarian aid, displacement, and urbanisation challenges due to climate change. Such dynamics further accentuate the collapse of traditional livelihood systems under the weight of environmental pressures.¹⁵

Somalia's enduring political dysfunctions have undermined the state's capacity to respond to crises, resulting in an inextricable nexus between environmental fragility and broader governance failures. At the heart of this issue is the enduring lack of legitimacy and territorial control enjoyed by successive federal administrations, and particularly the incumbent administration led by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM), across large swathes of the country. Somaliland, Puntland, and Jubaland (which jointly constitute at least 65% of the Somali Republic's territory) operate outside the purview of the federal government, while much of the remainder of the country is controlled by Al-Shabaab. This has rendered the FGS unable to meaningfully steer any climate-related solutions.

Nevertheless, federal authorities have embraced elements of the climate agenda— predominantly as a means of rent-seeking. The federal Environment Ministry is widely regarded as one of the most corrupt branches of the Executive, transforming Somalia's extreme vulnerability to climate stress into opportunities for enrichment rather than reform. During HSM's second term, the ministry has been repeatedly described as a patronage tool to benefit the federal government's allies – and exclude its critics. Efforts to build national climate resilience are consistently undermined by fragmented authority structures, overlapping institutional mandates, and competing policy agendas, all of which weaken the coherence needed for an effective response.

Both Puntland and Jubaland have accused the federal government of weaponising and withholding development assistance amidst their rejection of Villa Somalia's sweeping changes to the country's constitutional and electoral models. The politicisation of the Environment Ministry and Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA), combined with allegations of serious corruption, undermines the national response to the impacts of climate change in Somalia. The climate response in Somalia remains far from being a cornerstone of devolved development and is instead part and parcel of enduring disagreements over national resource-sharing and humanitarian assistance.

¹³ Krampe, F., & Eklöw, K. (2019). Climate-related security risks and peacebuilding in Somalia (SIPRI Policy Paper No. 53). Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

¹⁴ International Crisis Group. (2024). Fighting climate change in Somalia's conflict zones. International Crisis Group.

¹⁵ Krampe, F., & Eklöw, K. (2019).

In yet another attempt to monopolise climate funds, Villa Somalia in 2024 further insisted that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) relinquish its oversight of climate to the federal government as part of the negotiations for it to become a Country Office. Although federal officials frequently attend international conferences on climate change, pledging national action plans and citing questionable statistics about the aid distributed by SoDMA, the reality remains that few climate-impacted Somalis are genuinely supported by such interventions. Since international assistance is nearly wholly concentrated in ‘accessible’ areas not under the control of Al-Shabaab, assistance is funnelled through Mogadishu, feeding into the enduring centre-periphery divisions within Somalia.

Whilst an opportunity exists for Somalia’s partners to nudge progressive action, the growing political schism over the federal government’s unilateral political agenda, coupled with a resurgent Al-Shabaab in 2025, is likely to distract from any long-term climate planning and investing sufficient political goodwill. Moreover, there is a heightened risk of Somalia either retreating from the climate change agenda if it seeks to join oil-exporting nations – as illustrated by its contentious hydrocarbon deal with Ankara in 2024.

AL SHABAAB AND CLIMATE VULNERABILITY: EXPLOITATION, CO-OPTATION, AND CONTROL

For Al-Shabaab, political and military objectives supersede all, and there is little indication from propaganda disseminated by Al-Shabaab’s sophisticated media wing, *Al-Kataib Media Foundation*, or from the occasional commentaries offered by its senior leaders, that it consciously engages with climate change issues. Though there has been a notable growing shift within its media output towards more explicitly engaging with Somali nationalism, and even economic policies, that is yet to incorporate the climate crisis on any significant scale. This does not mean, however, that the climate crisis does not intersect with the jihadists’ operations in a variety of ways.

Resource governance is central to Al-Shabaab’s political economy, in turn intersecting with climate change once more. The charcoal trade, although no longer a primary income source for Al-Shabaab, exemplifies the nexus between environmental degradation and insurgent financing. Until the fall of Kismaayo,¹⁶ the group profited from the trade for years, taxing transport routes and exploiting export corridors, particularly through Jubaland.¹⁷¹⁸ At its peak, the trade was worth over USD 360 million annually, with a single checkpoint in Lower Juba generating up to USD 18 million.¹⁹ Since 2018, Al-Shabaab has introduced selective environmental regulations in areas under its control – banning tree cutting in Harardheere and encouraging limited reforestation. These measures have clear strategic motives, with forest cover offering concealment from drone surveillance and conservationist rhetoric strengthening Al-Shabaab’s image as a legitimate authority responsive to local needs.²⁰

The group exercises strict control over vital natural resources, particularly water infrastructure in districts such as Adan Yabaal in Middle Shabelle, where diesel-powered boreholes and irrigation

¹⁶ UN Security Council. (2012). Resolution 2036. *United Nations Security Council*.

¹⁷ FAO. (2018). *Somalia floods update*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

¹⁸ Climate-Diplomacy. (2021). Climate change, charcoal trade and armed conflict in Somalia. *Climate Diplomacy*.

¹⁹ Global Initiative. (2017). *The charcoal conundrum: Ending the Somali illegal charcoal trade*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

²⁰ Wilson Center. (2024). Long term climate resilience: A pathway to stabilize Somalia. *Wilson Center*.

canals are operated by local residents under militant oversight. Access is monetised through embedded taxation: farmers pay seasonal fees, while herders are charged per animal. In Jilib, for instance, a farmer might pay USD 20 per planting cycle, with herders paying 5,000 Somali shillings per camel.²¹ These systems provide steady revenue and consolidate Al-Shabaab's grip over rural economies.

Al-Shabaab has quietly and repeatedly exploited humanitarian emergencies, accentuated or induced by climate change, as part of its political/military strategy and to subordinate populations under its control. The jihadists' humanitarian wing, for example, necessarily engages with issues such as flooding and drought. The militant group's expulsion of most foreign aid organisations in 2011 led to the formation of "drought committees" staffed by clerics and local officials managing limited relief efforts to create an image of responsive governance.²² During the 2020–2023 drought, Al-Shabaab expanded its governance role by constructing a reservoir, engaging in conflict mediation, and selectively delivering food to enhance its legitimacy.

Simultaneously, Al-Shabaab imposed blockades on contested towns like Wajid, Huddur, and Qansaxdheere, using denial of humanitarian action as a tool of punishment and territorial control.²³ However, the denial of humanitarian aid by Al-Shabaab to Hawaadle-majority areas in western Hiiraan contributed to the *ma'awiisley* uprising that dislodged the jihadists from significant parts of the region. This duality lies at the heart of Al-Shabaab's climate governance strategy: the group oscillates between stabilising and coercive behaviours, depending on the context and immediate objectives. Humanitarian principles do not guide the group's provision of humanitarian relief but are calculations of loyalty and control.²⁴

One of the major foreign partners of Al-Shabaab in responding to humanitarian needs – including climate-induced stresses – is Qatar Charity: the humanitarian arm of the Qatari state. But reporting on how precisely Qatar Charity intersects with climate change and vulnerabilities is hard to gauge, with minimal reporting on the activities of the organisation that works under Al-Shabaab's political and humanitarian conditions. Amidst the offensive in the first half of 2025, the jihadist group was also reported to have considered increasing its accessibility to Western humanitarian organisations as a means of displaying more moderate credentials, however.

Since Al-Shabaab is a sophisticated organisation, whose ability to adapt to deteriorating climate conditions is integral to its success, it is hard to assess the degree to which one can ascribe climate as a motivating factor in the jihadist group's rationale. But in the absence of effective climate-related interventions by the FGS and FMS governments, or their international partners, the pressures of climate change indirectly lend greater legitimacy to the institutions of the jihadist 'shadow state'.

Recruitment, Displacement and Gender

Long reliant on environmental stability as pastoralist and agrarian communities, climate-induced livelihood stress has become a key driver of Al-Shabaab recruitment. As recurrent droughts, crop failures and livestock losses destroy rural economies, Al-Shabaab exploits this economic vacuum, positioning itself as a provider of socio-economic security. The group offers material incentives—

²¹ International Crisis Group. (2024). Fighting climate change in Somalia's conflict zones. *International Crisis Group*.

²² International Crisis Group. (2024). Fighting climate change in Somalia's conflict zones. *International Crisis Group*.

²³ ACAPS. (2022). *Somalia: Humanitarian access constraints*. Assessment Capacities Project.

²⁴ Broek, E., & Hodder, C. M. (2022). *Towards an integrated approach to climate security and peacebuilding in Somalia*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

food, stipends, protection—while embedding its messaging in narratives of justice, piety, and resistance to corruption. These narratives resonate among marginalised populations who feel abandoned by a fragmented and indifferent state, transforming climate vulnerability into a vector for radicalisation.²⁵²⁶ This dynamic extends beyond Somalia's borders into Kenya and Ethiopia, where climate-driven displacement and marginalisation converge with insecurity.

Digital platforms have become an important enabler of Al-Shabaab's recruitment strategy, particularly among marginalised youth grappling with the psychological and material dislocations of environmental crises. By presenting its insurgency as a moral and religious obligation to oppose corrupt, outside-backed regimes, Al-Shabaab uses sophisticated propaganda that is spread through social media and encrypted messaging applications. Access to such material has been enhanced by Somalia's rapid urbanisation, with young, marginalised, displaced former pastoralists suddenly having far more access to online forums through which Al-Shabaab disseminates a vast quantity of propaganda. A more nuanced understanding of how the jihadist narratives intersect with climate change and the broader challenges facing Somali youth would require additional research.

POLICY GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Efforts to address the intersection of climate change, conflict and governance in Somalia have gained increased international and national attention, particularly through the development of frameworks such as Somalia's Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF).²⁷ But with a federal government so beleaguered and embattled, many of the responses have been extremely limited at best. Conceived as a cohesive strategy to promote resilience through integrated humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions, the RRF has failed to take meaningful hold—hampered by institutional fragility, minimal local involvement, and the government's lack of access to Al-Shabaab-held areas, where environmental grievances continue to go unaddressed and feed armed mobilisation.

Regional mechanisms such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) and the African Union's mission in Somalia have sought to integrate climate-security linkages into their planning. However, as IGAD's climate projections and early warning systems rarely feed into coordinated peacebuilding responses, and the AU mission has yet to operationalise its climate-security agenda, regional frameworks continue to fall short of delivering meaningful resilience on the ground.²⁸ Additionally, the United Nations has advanced key policy proposals on climate-security integration, but a lack of coordination with local frameworks continues to hinder their broader impact. Again, the directing of international and humanitarian assistance at the federal level has hindered its impact and implementation by feeding into the acute issues of politicisation of such aid and the enduring centre-periphery divisions.

²⁵ International Crisis Group. (2024). Fighting climate change in Somalia's conflict zones. *International Crisis Group*.

²⁶ Broek, E., & Hodder, C. M. (2022). *Towards an integrated approach to climate security and peacebuilding in Somalia*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

²⁷ UNDP and World Bank. (2018). *Toward drought recovery and resilience: The Somalia drought impact and needs assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework*. UNDP and World Bank.

²⁸ Broek, E., & Hodder, C. M. (2022). *Towards an integrated approach to climate security and peacebuilding in Somalia*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Further, despite regular rhetorical support for the “triple nexus” approach – linking humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work – national and regional climate-security strategies remain fragmented in practice. This has led to overlap in some areas and stark service gaps in others, especially in territories controlled by Al-Shabaab. Climate adaptation projects tend to prioritise accessible, government-held areas, neglecting regions where armed non-state actors operate – a blind spot that reinforces inequality and further erodes state legitimacy.

Donor dynamics have increasingly complicated climate-security efforts in Somalia. The recent reduction in USAID funding, for example, has disrupted vital programmes focused on stabilisation, health, and local governance – weakening gains in resilience and service delivery.²⁹ There remains little indication that the federal government– whose budget is funded 70% from foreign partners– is able to step in and assume responsibility for supporting these marginalised and vulnerable communities. With diminishing and competing demands for funding, much of the donor landscape remains geared toward short-term emergency response, sidelining the long-term structural reform needed to address the root causes of instability.³⁰ Attempts to ‘depoliticise’ such aid in a context like Somalia’s fundamentally misunderstands the complexities of its incomplete political settlement and clan-based society.

One of the most persistent analytical blind spots in climate-security programming is the failure to track how insurgents such as Al-Shabaab exploit crisis conditions. Despite their known tactics – controlling resources, extracting levies, and manipulating community relief structures – little has been done to monitor these behaviours systematically.³¹ In the absence of nuanced, real-time data and community perception studies, efforts to respond effectively to climate–conflict dynamics remain fundamentally constrained.

What Somalia urgently needs is a renewed commitment to participatory, climate-sensitive peacebuilding rooted in local experience. There are a number of avenues available to simultaneously develop climate adaptation and diminish the legitimacy afforded to Al-Shabaab due to its punishing consequences. Developing economic opportunities for long-marginalised groups through which the jihadists have perforated could be one central plank of such a climate-focused peacebuilding agenda. Projects that both seek to resolve intercommunal conflicts and address recurrent and enduring drivers of such violence are another.³² However, this would require creative and flexible programming, unfettered from excessive federal control, in order to engage FMS and local-level governance.

Climate denialism is not a problem in Somalia, not least because the adverse impact of climate change is visible, experiential and undeniable. To build on this positive social capital, the political elite and authorities will need to ‘vernacularise’ the jargon and discourse of climate change – in effect, translate the complex language and lexicon into one that is understandable to the majority. Equally important, there is a need to connect climate change to the indigenous ‘green’ values embedded in the Somali customary *xeer* and Islamic teachings. By reframing the debate and harnessing traditional normative customs, values and the spiritual worldview, policymakers may

²⁹ Wilson Center. (2024). Long term climate resilience: A pathway to stabilize Somalia. *Wilson Center*.

³⁰ Oxfam and Save the Children. (2012). *A dangerous delay: The cost of late response to early warnings in the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa*. Joint Agency Briefing Paper.

³¹ International Crisis Group. (2024). Fighting climate change in Somalia's conflict zones. *International Crisis Group*.

³² Broek, E., & Hodder, C. M. (2022). *Towards an integrated approach to climate security and peacebuilding in Somalia*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

dispel perceptions that the climate change agenda is Western-driven and are more likely to strengthen Somali uptake.

Given Al-Shabaab's current preoccupation with political and military strategy, it is unlikely that the group can be effectively engaged in the near future on issues of climate change. Even if the group agrees to a political dialogue as part of a wider peace process, climate change is likely to feature as a secondary or tertiary issue. It may be that the best route to Al-Shabaab on climate lies through Doha and the Qatar charity, rather than through a direct approach.

Looking ahead, it is clear that Somalis will need far greater climate adaptation support as pastoralism becomes harder to sustain as a viable livelihood. However, continued support for the federal government in the immediate term appears high-risk, given its contested legitimacy and the limits of its territorial control. That is not to deny there is a role for Mogadishu, but climate investment is likely better spent at the Federal Member State level and below: a decentralised framework for climate change action that is appropriate for the Somali context, and which doesn't continue to feed into patterns of destabilisation and exclusion is vital. In the absence of a functioning federation, the international community, alongside willing partners, will have to work in a far more decentralised manner if it wishes to be successful.

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