

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE: PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

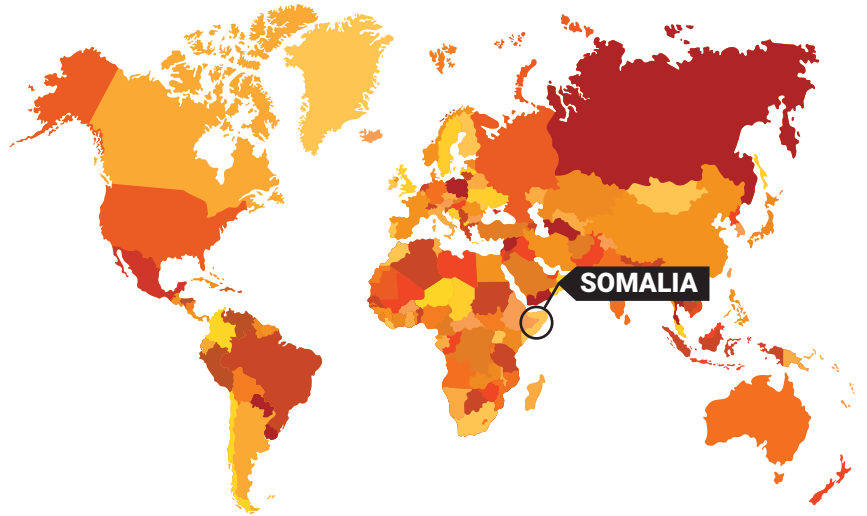
SOMALIA

WHERE:

Somalia, including the unrecognised Republic of Somaliland, is bordered by Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya. Located in north-eastern Africa, the coast spans from the Indian Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

The colonial history of this area includes the formation of Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, and French Djibouti.

Colonisation divided a highly sought after part of Africa into French, British, and Italian regions.



By 1960, the British and Italian areas had achieved independence and joined to form the Somali Republic under a constitution. The impact of colonial borders among different ethnic groupings caused tension after independence.

WHAT:

In 1969, General Siad Barre was part of a group that acknowledged the growing dissatisfaction in a government accused of corruption. Barre contributed to a coup and the forming of a socialist state, the Somali Democratic Republic.

Tension, due to years of regional wars and internal power struggles, eventually resulted in Barre being deposed. After a failed war with Ethiopia (the Ogaden War in 1977), compounded by cold war alliances and the Isaaq genocide in Somaliland, Barre was forced into exile and the resulting 1991 civil war caused a collapsed state. He had divided people on ethnic lines and political alliances.

The constant conflict resulted in violence, disbanded authorities, one million displaced people and five million threatened by hunger and disease.

WHO:

The end of General Siad Barre's dictatorship in 1991 gave voice to more than 14 groups, divided along ethnic, political, and clan lines.

A dominant force was the Somali National Alliance (SNA) under Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

The official President after the coup was Ali Mahdi Mohamed of the United Somali Congress (USC).

In exile, Barre also fought to reclaim his status through loyalists, who formed the Somali National Front (SNF).

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NZDF PEACEKEEPING IN SOMALIA UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA AND UNITED TASK FORCE

WHERE:

Mogadishu, with a large base at the airfield. The NZ camp, Taniwha Hill, was on sand dunes between the airfield and the Indian Ocean. A crucial NZDF contribution was the facilitation of goods for the United Nations by the Royal New Zealand Army Ordnance Corps, which also had staff in Kenya.

WHEN:

Once the scale of the threat to civilian lives was recognised in 1991, the United Nations made resolutions to investigate options and attempt to find solutions. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was authorised in April 1992.

WHAT:

Goals and mandates of UNOSOM (I&II) and UNITAF (United Task Force – which was formed to replace UNOSOM I):

- Ceasefire, weapons embargo, and disarmament to be monitored by United Nations observers.
- The protection of humanitarian convoys.
- After the situation worsened, the United States became involved under UNITAF. They authorised the use of 'all necessary means' to establish a secure environment for the relief effort.
- UNOSOM I: responsible for protecting the delivery of assistance and contributing to political efforts that would end the war.
- UNOSOM II: under the mandate recommended by the Secretary-General, would seek to complete, through disarmament and reconciliation, the task begun by UNITAF for the restoration of peace, stability, law, and order. The mandate would also empower UNOSOM II to provide assistance to the Somali people in rebuilding their economy and social and political life.

The NZDF key role was to facilitate the movement of supplies to UNOSOM efforts, primarily food. This involved ten-hour shifts and delivering up to 1,000 tonnes of food in one month. The Ordnance Corps was supported by transport, engineers, medical, and signals corps.

WHY:

The UN mission was to maintain a stable environment and easy passage of humanitarian aid, supporting economic development and assisting with disarmament. The primary objective was to end famine and create a functioning state.

UNOSOM II had 22,000 troops, and 8,000 logistics crew in the field.