

Conflict in North Somalia: “Congo” Style War for Resources

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On Monday the [5th](#) of November 2012, Somaliland forces mounted an offensive [1] against Khatumo state forces based in Hudun town.

Hudun[2] town is situated in the western parts of Sool province, in what was a relatively peaceful area of Northern Somalia.

Pro Somaliland media outlets reported [3] that “[the skirmishes](#)” were the result of elements who were trying to intimidate voters in the “[local elections](#) [4]” that was held in Somaliland. However the offensive launched by Somaliland on the 5th of November proved to be just the start of what would be a prolonged offensive campaign waged by Somaliland on Khatumo State forces based in Hudun town.

Repeated [5] clashes followed on the [28th](#) of November, the [1st](#), [31st](#) of December, the [23th](#), [24th](#) of January, the [1st](#), [13th](#) of February 2013, with the most recent one being on the 8th of March. The offensive on the [8th](#) of March followed the [press release](#) [6] by Jacka resources on 6th March of large structural petroleum prospects in North Somalia.

In three months’ time Somaliland attacked Hudun a total of nine times. Sources close to Somaliland have confirmed Somaliland is planning a new major offensive. In spite of Somaliland’s continued offensive, Khatumo remains in firm control of Hudun town.

Illegitimate Oil Deals

Prior to the start of its offensive on the 5th of November, Somaliland signed a deal [7] on the 30th of October 2012 with [Genel Energy Plc](#) to drill two wells for Oil in Northwestern Somalia, on two blocks assigned by Somaliland. Soon after the deal Somaliland militia headed towards Hudun and attacked the town.

Hudun town is situated on the Nugaal block [8], one of the blocks to be drilled for oil.

The Nugaal block is a stretch of land situated in the regions of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (Buhoodle town) in short the SSC [9] regions, and to a lesser extend Nugaal region. The Nugaal block has been [sold](#) [10] to oil companies by both Somaliland and Puntland. Somaliland has sold the land to Genel Energy led by [Tony Hayward](#), the former BP CEO, who headed BP during the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, the largest marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry. Puntland has sold the land to Horn Petroleum.

However both entities do not control or have minimal control of the Nugaal Block, with the later having no physical presence at all in the SSC region. There are also claims being made by large international oil companies including Royal Dutch Shell [11], who possess old oil

exploration licenses granted by the former Somali government of Major General Mohamed Siad Barre. The SSC region is not only rich in Oil but also has large reserves of Tin, Iron Ore, Zirconium, Copper, Cobalt and Chromium.

The Nugaal Block is largely [controlled](#) [12] by Khatumo State and cannot be sold to any foreign company without the consent of Khatumo State, that represents the aspirations of the local population.

Investors in companies who claim to have bought the rights to explore Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) from either Somaliland or Puntland should be informed about the facts on the ground, and the conflict that these oil deals have caused. Any funds disbursed to these two entities for drilling rights on the Nugaal block can be considered as an squandered investment and a lack of due diligence on the part of these companies.



The Nugaal block is the most sought out by the oil companies, with prospective resources of 4.1 Billion barrels of oil.

Extraction of Oil and Minerals can only be done with the support of the local population represented by Khatumo State of Somalia.

The War Waged against Khatumo State and the SSC population

Puntland and Somaliland have been waging war against each-other in the SSC regions for a [decade](#) [13] now, and in the last three years [against](#) [14] Khatumo State of Somalia and its predecessor [SSC](#).

Khatumo State of Somalia was created on the 12th of January 2012, in the historic town of Taleh [15]. The officials of [Khatumostate](#) of Somalia [16] have been elected and endorsed by the civil society at large including the 13 Garaads of the SSC regions (prominent elders of SSC), women associations and business groups.

Since the creation of Khatumo State of Somalia and its predecessor SSC, Somaliland and Puntland have moved closer to each-other and have formed an alliance to fully eliminate any party that may challenge their claims to these regions. This alliance culminated into a [coordinated](#) [17] attack on Khatumo State forces on the 28th of June 2012 by Puntland and Somaliland on Tukaraq a small village in Sool region, situated 15 Miles from Garowe, the capital of Puntland. The presumption in the SSC regions is that Puntland and Somaliland have divided the area between themselves.

Since the [capture](#) of Lasanod by Somaliland on the 5th of October 2007, there has been a relentless war against the local population. The war waged by Somaliland includes the targeting of food convoys, [sexual violence](#) [18], [arbitrary executions](#) of nomads [19] and their animals with mobile units of technicals mounted with machine guns. The wars waged by Somaliland in Buhoodle district alone have resulted in the displacement of 150,000 residents as reported [20] by the UN monitoring group on Somalia and Eritrea. These fleeing civilians end up in villages and cities where safety is provided by Khatumo State of Somalia or end up in refugee camps in Kenya.

The displacement of civilians from their homes and livelihoods by Somaliland is the main

cause of loss of life in the Northern region of Somalia. The war in the SSC region will continue and accelerate in the near future while Somaliland is trying to secure these regions for [seismic surveys](#) on the ground and eventually drilling.

Despite Somaliland's continues offensive it has been losing ground to Khatumo State that has the support of the local population.

The role of the International community and the UN

The UN has undertaken various governance and law programmes in Somaliland, including the training [21] of [Special police units](#), [maritime police](#) and the donating of [vehicles](#) [22]. The aim of these governance programs is to increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of the security forces thereby "increasing security" in "Somaliland".

These programs do not take into account the war waged by Somaliland on Khatumo State and the SSC population. Increasing the effectiveness of the security means increasing their ability to wage war. At the start of 2012, Somaliland started to use its newly acquired equipment and training received to [attack](#) Buhoodle district.

The UN is aware of the war that Somaliland is waging in the SSC region but is still committed to funding "governance and law" programs in Somaliland and has even increased funding for these kind of projects for 2013. Through the UN, the [United Kingdom](#) and to a lesser extend the European Union have been the biggest donors to Somaliland. The budget of Somaliland depends on the funds made available by the International community.

The United Kingdom has been informed [23] of the war waged by Somaliland by the SSC [diaspora](#) living in the United Kingdom and is well aware of Somaliland's war against Khatumo State of Somalia and its people. However it has promised increased funding [24] to Somaliland. One has to question why the United Kingdom is funding Somaliland while it is waging war in the SSC regions of Somalia.

Although there has been a decade of war in North Somalia (Somaliland), there is a media blackout of the conflict. Many media outlets even portray Somaliland as an oases of Peace in Northern Somalia, with the BBC leading the way.

Khatumo State and the SSC population

Khatumo State of Somalia and the population living in the SSC regions are aware that the war is not only about Somaliland wanting to secede, but that it is increasingly a war for resources. Somaliland has been able to promote itself as being in full control of the SSC region to oil companies, and is actively seeking to "sell" land to these companies. The international community is keen to explore these resources.

The war in the SSC regions is developing into a war for the resources of North Somalia. The human and material cost suffered by the SSC population is of no relevance to Somaliland and the oil companies.

Khaatumo State and the SSC population are aware that the resources on their land can either be a blessing or a curse. Today Khaatumo State controls the majority of the SSC regions and is actively working towards the development of the region. It is the right of the people of Khaatumo State to choose their own destiny, and to develop their own land.



Notes

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3. "Somaliland: Skirmishes in Hudun as Polling gets underway". <http://somalilandpress.com>. 5 November 2012.

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13. For an analysis, see: Markus V. Hoehne. "Puntland and Somaliland Clashing in Northern Somalia: Who Cuts the Gordian Knot?" <http://hornofafrica.ssrc.org>. 7 November 2007. Retrieved 30 March, from <http://hornofafrica.ssrc.org/Hoehne/>

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