
New Somalia

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Official name: Democratic Republic of Somalia

Area: 637 661 km²

Population: 2 900 000 rural: 89% (60% nomad)
urban: 11%

Rate of growth: 3.3%

Population density: 4 inhabitants per km²

Date of independence: July 1, 1961

Government: Supreme Council of the Revolution

President of the Council: Mohammed Siad Barre

National money: the somalo (0.14 = US \$ 1.00)

Capital: Mogadiscio, with 200 000 inhabitants

Principal cities: Hargeisa with 80 000 inhabitants

Merca with 62 000 inhabitants

Official languages: English, Italian and Arabic (the national language, Somali, is still not a written language)

Religion: Islam (95% of the population is Muslim)

Ethnic composition: Hamites, 1 500 000 to 1 700 000

Bantus, 60 000

Principal wealth: cattle

Agricultural production: sugar, corn, millet, bananas, peanuts

Labor force: cattle raising, 80%

agriculture, 2%

industry, commerce and transport, 5-10%

Per capita annual income: \$50

Infant mortality: 16 per 1000 inhabitants (1960-61)

Doctors: 1 per 30 000 inhabitants (1966)

THE steps taken two and a half years ago in Somalia toward the construction of a nationalist-type state are today receiving national approbation and that of progressive forces inside and outside the continent.

President Mohammed Siad Barre's governmental measures for social welfare have confirmed the principles announced in 1969 by the then recently created

Supreme Council of the Revolution: to struggle fundamentally for national unity and the development of the backward and weak economy.

Somalia's historic revolutionary process grows out of the struggles waged against the Romans, the Greeks, the Persians and then the English, the Italians and the French. It comes up to today, when the 4 500 000 Somalians are determined to

wipe out the scars left by colonialism and neocolonialism.

Somalia has never been so profoundly disturbed in its nine years of independence as when, in October of 1969, it became known that President Ali Shermarke had been assassinated in a province in the north of the country, and seven days later a military Junta deposed the Prime Minister.



From then up to now, the Somalians have seen, day by day, the construction of schools, hospitals, sports centers, houses—despite the fact that the two basic sources of foreign aid, the United States and the German Federal Republic, had been withdrawn, the first charging use of the national flag on ships bound for Cuba and Viet Nam, and the second recognition of the German Democratic Republic.

From that time on, the government strengthened all its ties with the socialist

countries. Military equipment, technical and financial aid came to Somalia in considerable amounts, from the USSR as well as from the rest of the socialist camp.

The youth attend specialized schools in these countries to become engineers, doctors, etc.

This cooperation has permitted the government to consolidate internal relations with a population that is 60%

nomad and which until a few years ago was divided into tribes that fought among themselves. Later the government's fed ethnic differences to obtain a decisive vote at election times.

When Siad Barre came to power there were more than 70 political parties.

The government organized a commission of experts to work on the creation of an alphabet which the national language did not have. This prevented national history and traditions from being passed down in written form; they were



preserved orally only. Moreover only a minority spoke English or Italian. These two official languages have been taught in the few schools in the country and currently in the university whose center, for the most part, is on the outskirts of the capital. The structuring of the faculty of agronomy is almost completed and the faculty of medicine has been started.

Installations are being constructed in different zones to accommodate these large masses, who, in search of better pastures,

move from one point to another dragging their children and cattle along.

Several refrigeration centers for milk are already in use. Formerly, the nomad lost a large part of the milk and was only able to use a small amount. Now he is able to take care of his cattle and bring the milk to the appropriate establishments.

Other measures put into practice include "urgency programs," farms where youth between 14 and 27 years of age,

mostly peasants, are voluntarily recruited. They work, study and complete their military service at the same time. Several thousand youth are already organized this way. In the district of Merca, 100 kilometers from Mogadiscio, there are camps that house young women as well as young men.

would even be the possibility of electrifying large zones.

The Juba and the Shibeli run almost the full length of the country. At the moment great hydraulic projects are underway and canals and dams are being built.



After two years in the camps, the men can go into the army or continue to work in agriculture. The women — still a minority in this activity — are incorporated into advancement courses as public health workers.

In addition to the agricultural problems there are water problems. The country has two important rivers; by taking advantage of the waters technically, these difficulties would be overcome and there

Another serious inconvenience is the lack of national technicians, typical of countries which have been under the colonial yoke for years. In 1970, the nationalization of the major part of foreign industries — banks, sugar center, small industries and 50% of one of the principal products, bananas — necessitated state formation of its own cadres in a hurry.

Although the theme is treated with considerable discretion, the government

projects the exploitation of uranium deposits discovered in 1968. Its reserves are calculated at a million tons. Shortly after the discovery it was said that its mineral was of better quality than that produced in Canada, considered to be the best in the world.

Presently the United States is building

the Indian Ocean and face the Arab Gulf, an ideal and enviable spot for the aspirations certain countries have over the emirates of the Arab Gulf and their rich oil resources.

Moreover, Somalia has to face all the difficulties noted from foreign aggression by western forces supported by NATO



the Mogadiscio aqueduct in Somalia under an agreement signed at the beginning of 1960. After the triumph of the revolution in 1969, the US company said it would abandon its installation, but the government replied that in such a circumstance it would find itself obliged not to pay for what had already been built.

The construction of the country is not easy, especially with a nomadic population that extends over 600 km² and with a strategic position that permits it to view

which, on various occasions, have tried to penetrate the country by attempting to put an end to the government of Siad Barre and recuperate their lost influence and interests. But the president himself has said: "We are facing all the difficulties of a country building socialism; the reactionary forces and the poverty to which the country has been subjected. Nevertheless we will win the people's confidence because they struggle for their own interests."