

Somalia: 'Hard Truths for Hard Times'

By [Chris Floyd](#)

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

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How bad is the situation in Somalia, the third target of George W. Bush's "Terror War" take-downs? It's "worse than Darfur," says the UN's humanitarian chief, John Holmes.

Holmes, a former top British diplomat, told the Telegraph that "In terms of the numbers of people displaced, and our access to them, Somalia is a worse crisis than Darfur or Chad or anywhere else this year."

The sheer number of refugees in Somalia — approximately 400,000 — is still smaller than the two million or more who have fled their homes in Darfur, but as the Telegraph notes:

"The speed and size of the exodus from Mogadishu has eclipsed the emergency in the western Sudanese province, where there are established camps run by international aid agencies. There are no such camps in Somalia, an east African country already on its knees after 16 years of clan fighting and no central government.

"Most of those who have fled in recent weeks, including women, children and the elderly, are camping in fields in areas surrounding Mogadishu, without access to food, shelter, clean water or medicines.

"The few medical relief agencies operating in the region, including Medecins Sans Frontieres and the International Committee of the Red Cross, have reported fears of cholera outbreaks.

"'We are only reaching maybe 35 to 40 per cent of those in need because of difficulties of access and security and of our presence on the ground,' Mr Holmes said in Nairobi yesterday."

Where did these refugees come from? They were driven from their homes by the "regime change" operation greenlighted by the Bush Administration late last year. The Bushists employed the American-trained and -funded military of the repressive Ethiopian dictatorship plus an alliance of Somali warlords and gangsters as a proxy force to overthrow the first stable government in Somalia in the past 15 years — the Islamic Courts Council. Bush also contributed U.S. airstrikes — on civilians — and U.S. Special Forces troops to the aggression. (See "Black Hawk Rising: CIA Warlords Take Control in Mogadishu" for more information and links.)

The Council — a coalition of moderate and hardline grassroots Islamic courts — stood in the way of the implantation of the more pliable warlord-gangster faction that the Bushists wanted to bring to power. There's oil to be had in Somalia — and its new Bush-installed masters have duly announced that they will pursue an "oil law" just like the American-authored measure in Iraq, opening up the country like a can of sardines to foreign oil

barons. Meanwhile, Somalia's strategic position in the Horn of Africa makes it a key linchpin for the Administration's "Africom" — the new "unified command" to oversee America's burgeoning military involvement in Africa. (And oh yes; there were supposed to be some of them al-Qaedaiks hiding out in Somalia; in fact, Bush killed dozens of Somali civilians in bombing raids on fleeing civilians in an attempt to knock off a couple of the alleged dastards. He failed, of course; but at least the men, women and children who had their guts ripped out and their heads blown off and their limbs torn from their bodies died in a good cause.)

The Somali "regime change" op intensified last month when Bush's Ethiopian proteges launched a ferocious attack on resistance forces in the capital of Mogadishu. Tanks and artillery rained shells on residential areas, killing hundreds of people and driving hundreds of thousands more from the city. Many fled toward Kenya, where most were turned away, and others were captured by Kenyan security forces and American agents, then "rendered" to torture chambers in Ethiopia. The victims included a pregnant Swedish woman and a New Jersey man.

But don't worry, neither of them were white, so it's OK. If they had been of paler hue, of course, perhaps the Bush-backed bloodbath would have attracted more than a modicum of carefully massaged notice in the American media. But not even the "progressive" blogosphere paid much attention to this new "War on Terror" atrocity. Most of them seemed more preoccupied with what Jonathan Chait said about them in the New Republic — a topic of supreme importance, to be sure, and far more interesting than the same old yadda yadda yadda about human suffering over in Africa somewhere, especially if George Clooney is not around.

Yet even if Clooney-less human suffering doesn't move the punditry of print and pixel, you'd think the long-term strategic considerations raised by this murderous "intervention" in Africa would spark some interest. With the establishment of Africom, with its cozying up to the vicious dictatorship in Ethiopia — and the even more repressive regime in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea (as Crossed Crocodiles notes) — the Bush Administration has well and truly launched us on a new "Great Game," this time between the United States and China, in a bid to dominate Africa's energy resources. We are in for some down and dirty times in Africa over the next decades, and the Bush-backed war in Somalia — with its brutality, lies, ruin, death and murder — is just a curtain-raiser.

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