

Somalia Is Hellbent on Waging Hybrid War on Ethiopia? The Horn of Africa Could become Engulfed in Conflict.

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

Global Research, September 25, 2024

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

The whole Horn could become engulfed in conflict if this proxy war spirals out of control.

Somalian **Foreign Minister Ahmed Moalim Fiqi** recently [told local media](#) that his country might back anti-government groups in Ethiopia if Addis goes through with [recognizing Somaliland's independence](#) in exchange for military-commercial port rights [per their Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU). This builds upon the [observation from early January](#) that Somalia wants to ally with Eritrea and especially Egypt for waging [Hybrid War](#) against Ethiopia and Somaliland. Here are Fiqi's exact words:

"The option to have contacts with armed rebels in Ethiopia or rebels that are fighting against the Ethiopia regime — if it continues this, to have contact with them is an option open to Somalia, it's a door open to us.

We have not reached that stage, there is a hope there will be a solution. But it is a path open to us ... it's the correct thing to go there, to take that path to meet them, to support them, to stand by them (the rebels). But that will come when they continue their hostility, and attempt to implement the so-called agreement.

We discussed (ties with the TPLF), but at this time the collapse of Ethiopia is not in the interest of Somalia and the Horn of Africa region. But if they continue to [support] those opposing Somalia and with the secessionist groups [that] they have signed [an] agreement with, it's an option for us."

To begin with, there's no comparison between Ethiopia's relations with Somaliland and Somalia's envisaged ones with anti-government Ethiopian groups. Somaliland actually achieved independence right before Somalia but then agreed to an ultimately failed unity project that ended in 1991. It then redeclared its independence and has been functioning as an unrecognized sovereign state since then. Somaliland just wants to be left alone to develop in peace and doesn't support anti-Somalian groups.

Anti-government Ethiopian groups are completely different since some of them have carried out acts of terrorism and have been designated by the state accordingly (though some have since had this designation lifted to facilitate peace talks). Regardless of whether or not they had genuinely homegrown beginnings, they've all since come to function as foreign states' proxies. None of these groups can claim any level of sovereignty akin to Somaliland either. They're basically local warlords, nothing more.

Another point is that Ethiopia is Africa's second-largest country with approximately 130 million people, and the external exacerbation of this cosmopolitan civilization-state's ethno-regional conflicts could reverberate throughout the region and beyond. Fiqi tacitly recognizes this, ergo his remark about how "at this time" his country doesn't want to try catalyzing Ethiopia's collapse, but he left open the possibility that these calculations could change. In reality, the decision has already likely been made.

Somalia's newfound military alliance with Egypt, which has seen that Arab Republic [pour weapons and reportedly also troops](#) into this East African nation, has placed Mogadishu under Cairo's control. Egypt has historically sought to divide-and-rule Ethiopia since it fears this regional giant's rise and harbors hegemonic intentions in this part of the continent. This explains the [drama that it artificially manufactured](#) over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam so as to create the pretext for destabilizing it.

The only proxy war asset under the Federal Government of Somalia's suspected partial control is Al-Shabaab, which is on the same side as it in opposition to the MoU as explained [here](#), but Ethiopia is already fighting against that UN-designated group in Somalia. Their forces have been there for years as part of an approved mission and [might not depart](#) even if Mogadishu demands such by year's end like was earlier threatened since some of that host country's regions want it to stay to protect them.

Impoverished Somalia can ill-afford to purchase arms on the international market even after the three-decade-long UN embargo [was finally lifted](#) last December so it'll have to rely on its Egyptian patron, though Cairo is [also struggling](#) due to the Red Sea Crisis slashing its revenue from the Suez Canal. Nevertheless, Egypt might have enough military reserves to lend some to Somalia with strings attached, which could then be funneled to Al-Shabaab and possibly also to anti-government Ethiopian groups too.

Neither of those two have much experience in waging Hybrid Wars, however, which is where Eritrea could come in. It was [previously under UN sanctions](#) for arming, equipping, and training Al-Shabaab so the precedent exists for Asmara to revive these relations if the price is right. All three are in difficult financial straits, but Eritrea has once again reverted to its traditionally anti-Ethiopian policy as a result of the [regional security dilemma worsening](#), which is why it might be willing to do this on the cheap.

Regardless of whatever happens, Somalia is hellbent on waging Hybrid War on Ethiopia, which in the worst-case and extremely fringe scenario could provoke an unprecedented migrant crisis that makes the Syrian one from a decade ago look like child's play. It's therefore imperative that all responsible members of the international community strongly condemn Somalia and act against those of its allies who assist it in this scheme. The whole Horn could become engulfed in conflict if this proxy war spirals out of control.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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