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Somali citizens seeking supplies during *Operation Restore Hope*. Image online via the Library of Congress.

Somalia is an ancient country whose people are mostly descended from six different clans. With a stunning coastline on the Indian Ocean, it is located in "The Horn" of Africa. Not far from Yemen, it is adjacent to the Arabian Peninsula.

It is believed ancient Egyptians called Somalia the Land of Punt (or, "God's Land"). Because of its coastal location, the country's people long traded with Chinese, Greeks, and Arabs. It is said that Chinese merchants brought giraffes, leopards and tortoises home to their imperial rulers. Livestock is still Somalia's most significant export.

Most of the population are practicing Muslims, as these Somali posters illustrate. Approximately 1% of the people are Christians.

Unlike most countries, Somalis are a homogeneous people. That fact, however, has not stopped them from warring amongst themselves. Famine, often-present in this mostly dry land, has complicated the economic and political situation for years. The infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world: 125 deaths for every 1,000 births.

For slightly more than two decades, Siad Barre tried to transform Somalia into a Socialist state. Posters from the time he ruled clearly show an affinity with a Marxist-Leninist revolution. But when Barre was deposed, in 1991, the country descended into chaos.

Following closely on the heels of anarchy was civil war and famine. Refugee camps became the norm as Somalis were forced to leave their destroyed homes in search of food and shelter. Mogadishu, normally a city of about 500,000 people, was overwhelmed. It is estimated that 2 million people crowded its streets.

Somalis were in desperate trouble. Nations of the world, through the auspices of the United Nations, sent humanitarian aid. So did the United States, in its *Operation Restore Hope*.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SOMALIA-IN-TROUBLE-Black-Hawk-Down)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SOMALIA-IN-TROUBLE-Black-Hawk-Down>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SOMALIA-IN-TROUBLE-Black-Hawk-Down)

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View of Somalia's Coast

Image, Library of Congress.

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Somalis During Operation Restore Hope

Image, Library of Congress.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Somalis-During-Operation-Restore-Hope>



Horn of Africa - Map

Digital image by Sam Fentress. License: GNU Free Documentation License, version 1.2 or later, and Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike, version 2.0. Attribution is required.

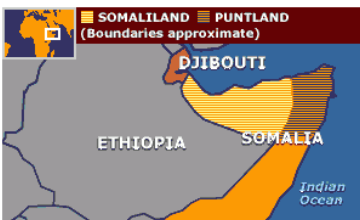
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Horn-of-Africa-Map>



Map of Somalia

Map, courtesy MSNBC.

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Puntland

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Somalia's Main Export: Livestock

Image, Library of Congress.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Somalia-s-Main-Export-Livestock>

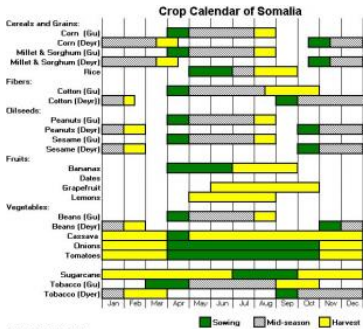


Pastoral Scene in Somalia

Image, Library of Congress.

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Four main seasons:

- Gu rains (April – June),
- Hagaa dry season (July – September),
- Deyr rains (October – November),
- Jilaa dry season (December – March)

Average Rainfall:

Most of the country receives less than 500 mm annually. Much of north and northeast Somalia receives just 50-150 mm. Some northern highlands and coastal areas receive 500 mm. The southwest receives an average of 300 – 500 mm. April first is the median start of the main rainy season, but varies from early March to early May. Rainfall delays in April by two weeks or more will usually result in yield reductions.

Crop Characteristics:

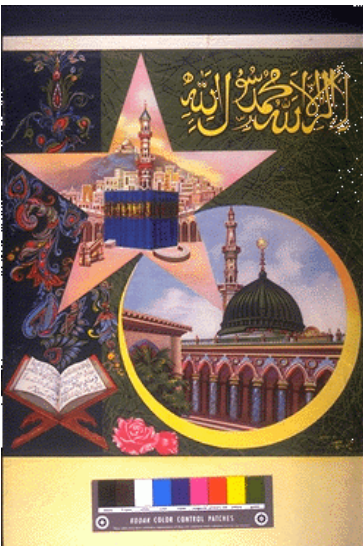
Rainfed sorghum, and irrigated maize and rice are the primary crops. Sorghum is the principal rainfed crop and it is primarily grown in the Bay region. Maize is the principal rainfed crop and it is primarily grown in the Lower Shabelle region. The Bay and Lower Shabelle provinces account for about 68-75% of annual grains production. The Deyr crop (secondary) typically accounts for 25-30% of total annual grains production. In the south, about 18% of the acreage is irrigated.

USDA Production Estimates and Crop Assessment Division (PECAD)
 Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
<http://as.usda.gov/pecad/pecad.html>

Somalia Crop Calendar

Graph, courtesy Library of Congress.

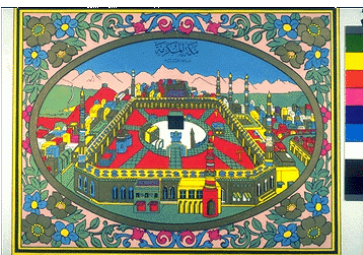
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Islamic Poster from Somalia

Image, Library of Congress.

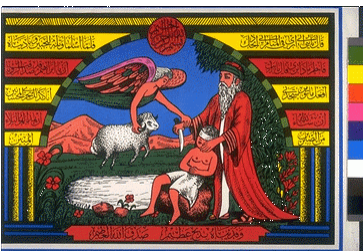
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Mecca in a Somalian Poster

Image, Library of Congress.

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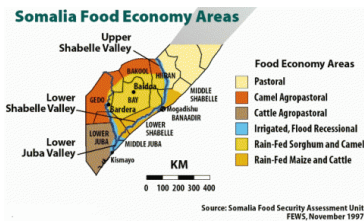


Somalian Poster Depicting Ibrahim and Ishmael

Image, Library of Congress.

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Somalia Food Economy Areas

Graph, courtesy Library of Congress.

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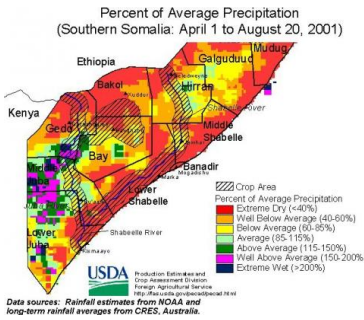


Evidence of Chaos After Barre

Image, Library of Congress.

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Average Precipitation in Southern Somalia

Graph, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Infant Mortality in Somalia

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Siad Barre, Former President of Somalia

Image, Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Siad-Barre-Former-President-of-Somalia>



Socialism under Barre

Image, Library of Congress.

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Socialist Poster, Somalia

Image, Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Socialist-Poster-Somalia>



Somali Political Poster

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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