Islam arrives on the Somali peninsula in the 9th or 10th century when Arab families settle along the Somali coast. From the 13th century to the arrival of the European colonialists in the 19th century, the history of the region is marked by the rise and fall of Arab coastal city states and Ottoman sultanates in Mogadishu, Merca, Brava in the south, and Zayla and Berbera in the north, and other inland states of the Ajuran, Geledi in the south and Majeerteen sultanates in the northeast. But Somali pastoral society prior to European colonialism was essentially stateless.

1827-97

European colonial partition of the Horn of Africa leaves the Somali people in five states: the British Somaliland Protectorate; Somalia Italiana; Côte Française des Somaliers (now Djibouti); the British administered Northern Frontier District of Kenya; and the Abyssinian Empire (Ethiopia).

1899–20

The religious leader and warrior-poet Sayyid Mahammed Abdalla Hassan and his Dervish movement fight a holy war to rid the Somali territories of the colonial infidels, especially the British and Ethiopians. His movement is routed when the British Royal Airforce bomb his fort in the present day Sool region.

1941

Italy briefly occupies Somaliland but is defeated by the Allies and a British Military Administration is established throughout the Somali region.

The Somali Youth League, the first nationalist party, is formed. It aims to unify all Somali territories and secure independence, and it opposes clanism.

The Somali National League in British Somaliland has similar nationalist aims.

1950

Somalia is placed under a UN trusteeship, administered by Italy for ten years. British Somaliland reverts to a protectorate and the Ogaden is returned to Ethiopian control.

26 June 1960

British Somaliland gains independence.

1 July 1960

Italian Somalia gains independence and unites with Somaliland to form the Somali Republic, with Abdirashid Ali Shermarke as Prime Minister and Aden Abdule Osman as the provisional President.

1963-67

Kenyan Somalis fight for the independence of northeastern Kenya, dubbed the ‘shifta war’.

1967

Abdirashid Ali Shermarke is elected President of Somalia and Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal is appointed Prime Minister.

June 1967

15 October 1969

President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke is assassinated.

21 October 1969

In a ‘bloodless coup’ the army led by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre overthrows the civilian government of Prime Minister Egal, suspends the constitution and bans all political parties.

21 October 1970

Siad Barre declares Somalia a socialist state, embarks on a range of socialist economic programmes and seeks support from the Soviet Union.

21 October 1972

An official orthography for the Somali language is introduced with a modified Roman alphabet.

September 1974

Revolution in Ethiopia

1977

June

Djibouti gains independence

July

Following clashes between the Ethiopian army and the Western Somali Liberation Front, the Somali army equipped by the Soviet Union invades the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. In a dramatic reversal, Moscow switches support to Ethiopia a few months later.

March 1978


April 1978

The government survives a failed military coup. One of the coup plotters Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed helps found the first armed opposition movement, the Somali Salvation Front (SSDF) that begins to attack Somali forces from Ethiopia.

1980

Somalia strengthens diplomatic links with the United States and receives economic and military aid in return for US access to Berbera port.

April 1981

The Somali National Movement (SNM) is formed in London by Isaaq émigrés with a manifesto to remove the Barre regime and return the country to democratic rule.

January 1986

Establishment of the Inter-Govermental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGAD) by Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda.

April 1988

Somalia and Ethiopia sign a peace accord, ending ten years of hostilities.

May 1988

The SNM attack Burco and Hargeisa. The Somali government responds with aerial bombing of Hargeisa, killing thousands of civilians and forcing 650,000 people to seek refuge in Ethiopia. Reports of human rights abuses lead to the freezing of foreign aid.
January 1989 | The United Somali Congress (USC) is formed in Rome, drawing support from the Hawiye clan.

March 1989 | The Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) is formed in Middle Jubba, drawing support from the Ogaden clan.

March 1993 | A joint UN-Ethiopian sponsored reconciliation conference is held in Addis Ababa. Some 15 factions, with Somaliland as an observer, sign an agreement to disarm and work towards establishing a transitional authority.

May 1990 | A ‘Manifesto’ calling for dialogue and political reform is signed by 114 politicians, religious leaders, professionals and business people and published in Mogadishu.

UNSCR 814 authorizes UNITAF to hand over to a second UN mission, UNOSOM II. With a multinational force of 28,000 military personnel and 3,000 civilians operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, it has authority for ‘peace enforcement’.

December 1990 | The USC enters Mogadishu and all remaining internationals are evacuated to US warships.

January 1991 | Barre flees Mogadishu as USC forces capture the city. There is a massive exodus from Mogadishu as the city is ‘cleansed’ of members of the Darood clan associated with Barre, along with other non-Hawiye. The Manifesto Group of the USC elects Ali Mahdi Mohamed as interim president, a move rejected by USC military commander General Mohamed Farah Aideed.

May 1991 | At the ‘Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples’ in Burco, the SNM proclaims the independence of the Republic of Somaliland within the borders of the British Somaliland Protectorate, revoking the 1960 Act of Union with Somalia. Chairman of the SNM Abdulrahman Ali Ahmed ‘Tuur’ becomes Somaliland’s first president.

The Mengistu government in Ethiopia is overthrown by Eritrean and Tigrean rebel groups.

June 1993 | Eritrea secures independence after a UN-supervised referendum.

June-July 1991 | Djibouti hosts two rounds of peace talks attended by six factions. Ali Mahdi is confirmed as President. This is rejected by General Aideed.

November 1991 | Intense fighting begins between factions of the USC in Mogadishu and lasts for four months, while famine rages through much of southern Somalia.

January 1994 | A peace agreement is signed between Aideed and Ali Mahdi and security in Mogadishu improves.

January 1992 | UNSCR 733 imposes a complete arms embargo on Somalia.

March 1994 | US military forces withdraw from Somalia.

March 1992 | A UN-brokered ceasefire is agreed between Ali Mahdi and Aideed. Humanitarian agencies gradually return to Somalia.

November 1994 | Civil war breaks out in Somaliland causing large-scale population displacement from Hargeisa and Burco. The conflict, which had its roots in grievances over power-sharing and state control of economic assets, was portrayed by the government as a struggle between ‘nationalists’ defending Somaliland independence and ‘federalists’ advocating a relationship with Somalia, a picture that gained credence when Somaliland’s first president joined Aideed’s government in Mogadishu.

April 1992 | The first UN Special Envoy, Mohamed Sahnoun, is appointed and the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) is created to protect humanitarian supplies.

June 1992 | An attempt by the Islamist group Al Itihad Al Islamiya (Islamic Union) to take control of the northeast is defeated by the SSDF led by Abdullahi Yusuf.

January 1995 | Siyad Barre dies in exile in Nigeria.

July 1992 | ‘Operation Provide Relief’ is launched to airlift food aid to the southern regions.

March 1995 | UNOSOM II mission withdraws from Somalia.

December 1992 | UN Resolution 794 authorizes the use of ‘all necessary means’ to secure humanitarian operations, and ‘Operation Restore Hope’ is launched with a US-led multi-national peacekeeping force – the Unified Task Force (UNITAF).

The people of Bay and Bakool regions form the Digil-Merifle Governing Council.
June 1995  General Aideed declares a ‘broad-based’
(salballar) government.

September 1995  General Aideed’s forces occupy Baidoa. The
Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) is formed in
opposition.

March 1996  IGADD becomes IGAD and adds peace and
security to its regional mandate.

August 1996  General Aideed dies of gunshot wounds sustained
in a battle for control of banana exports. His son,
Hussein Aideed takes over his leadership.

November 1996  An Ethiopian-sponsored reconciliation conference
in Sodere brings together 41 Somali leaders from
26 factions and establishes the National Salvation
Council (NSC). It is boycotted by Hussein Aideed,
who is accused by Ethiopia of collaborating with
Islamic groups. Ethiopian forces attack Al Itihad
bases in Gedo region.

February 1997  In Somaliland a National Conference in Hargeisa
officially ends the civil war. The National Charter
is replaced by a Provisional Constitution. Egal is
reselected as President for an additional two years,
which is later extended to five.

May 1998  Initial border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea

July-August 1998  Mogadishu-based faction leaders negotiate the
establishment of a Benadir Regional Authority and
Aideed relinquishes his claim to the presidency.

August 1998  Garowe Community Constitutional Conference
agrees to form the non-secessionist Puntland State of
Somalia, with Abdullahi Yusuf as president.

May 1999  The RRA expels Aideed’s forces from Bay and
Bakool region with assistance from Ethiopia and
establishes its own administration.

May 2000  At the initiative of the Djibouti government and
IGAD, the Somali National Peace Conference is
convened in Arta.

August 2000  In Arta, a Transitional National Assembly is
formed composed of 245 representatives.
It elects Abdulqasim Salad Hassan as the
president of a Transitional National Government
(TNG).

November 2000  The TNG represents Somalia at the IGAD summit
in November and OAU summit in Tripoli in
February 2001, where it ratifies the Constitutive
Act of the African Union.

December 2000  Ethiopia and Eritrea sign a peace agreement in
Algeria.

March 2001  The Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council
(SRRC) comprising faction leaders opposed to the
TNG is formed in Awasa in Ethiopia.

May 2001  Somaliland’s constitution, which affirms
Somaliland’s independence, is subjected to a
public referendum paid for by Somaliland. The
government claims a large voter turn out of which
97 per cent endorsed the constitution.

June 2001  The mandate of the Puntland administration
and Parliament expires. The Chairman of the
Supreme Court rejects Abdullahi Yusuf’s attempt
to extend his mandate and announces that, in
line with the Charter, he will assume the office
of interim President pending a community
conference.

July 2001  Following the constitutional plebiscite, political
organizations are registered in Somaliland.

August 2001  Egal survives an impeachment vote in the
Somaliland Parliament. Sultans meeting in Burco
criticize Egal’s handling of the move to multi-
party politics and demand the disbandment
of UDUB. The Sultans are arrested when they
visit Hargeisa causing fear of renewed conflict.
The crisis is defused by the intervention of civic
activists.

November-December 2001  Outgoing Kenyan President Daniel arap
Moi convenes a meeting between the TNG, some
members of the SRRC and other faction leaders
who sign the Nakuru agreement.

November 2001  The US government freezes the funds of the main
Somali remittance bank Al Barakaat for suspected
links with al-Qaeda.

May 2002  Somaliland President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal
dies in hospital in South Africa and power passes to
his Vice President Dahir Riyale Kahin.

October 2002  The Somalia National Reconciliation Conference
sponsored by IGAD opens in the Kenyan town of
Eldoret, intended to reconcile the TNG and the
SRRC and produce a successor government.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2002</td>
<td>People in Somaliland participate in multi-party elections for District Council for the first time in 30 years. The three political organizations – UDUB, Kulmiye, UCID (Justice and Welfare Party) – with the most votes win the right to form political parties and contest presidential and parliamentary elections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>Khartoum peace talks between the TFG and ICU, mediated by the Arab League, fail to reach agreement. Somalia’s first known suicide bombing targets President Yusuf outside parliament in Baidoa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2006</td>
<td>‘War of words’ between Ethiopia and ICU leaders: Premier Meles Zenawi says Ethiopia is ‘technically’ at war with the Islamists because they had declared jihad on his country.</td>
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<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Dahir Riyale Kishin narrowly wins the Somaliland Presidential elections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2003</td>
<td>Agreement is reached to end the civil war in Puntland. Abdullahi Yusuf remains president, the opposition of Mohamud Muse Hersi ‘Adde’ gain positions in the administration and opposition forces are integrated into the Puntland army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>The UN Security Council endorses deployment of African peacekeepers, specifying that neighbouring states should not deploy troops. Islamist leaders react by saying they will tackle foreign forces as invaders. Fighting starts between the ICU and the Ethiopian-backed TFG. The UN Security Council fails to agree on a statement calling on foreign forces to withdraw. Ethiopian and TFG forces oust the ICU, capturing Mogadishu on 28 December.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2004</td>
<td>A Transitional Federal Charter for Somalia is adopted and a 275-member transitional parliament is inaugurated in Kenya.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2004</td>
<td>Abdullahi Yusuf is elected interim president of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) by the transitional parliament for a five year term. He appoints Ali Muhammad Gedi prime minister.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>Islamists abandon their last stronghold in Kismayo, President Abdullahi Yusuf enters Mogadishu for the first time since taking office in 2004. Ethiopians pursue remnants of ICU leadership to the Kenyan border. In its first direct US military intervention in Somalia since 1993, the US carries out air strikes in southern Somalia against fleeing ICU, targeting al-Qaeda figures thought to be harbouring the ICU. But this results in a number of civilian casualties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2005</td>
<td>The TFG splits over Abdullahi Yusuf’s call for African forces to assist him establish his government in Mogadishu. Parliamentary speaker Shariff Hassan Sheikh Adan leads 60 dissenting legislators to Mogadishu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2005</td>
<td>An attempt is made to assassinate Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi in Mogadishu. Civil society groups launch the Mogadishu Security and Stabilization Plan in an attempt to restore security to the capital, leading to the removal of roadblocks and encampment of militia. Abdullahi Yusuf relocates his government from Nairobi to Jowhar due to lack of security in Mogadishu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2006</td>
<td>The ICU defeat the warlord alliance, establish an administration in Mogadishu and take over other parts of southern Somalia. Mogadishu’s air and seaports are re-opened for the first time since 1995.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>The UN says that more than 320,000 Somalis have fled fighting in Mogadishu since February and the World Food Programme warns that a resurgence of piracy is threatening food supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>A US warship shells suspected al-Qaeda targets in Puntland. Prime Minister Ghedi escapes a suicide car bomb attack on his compound. Ethiopian Premier Meles visits Mogadishu pledging to withdraw his troops once peace takes hold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>A National Reconciliation Conference starts in Mogadishu and is criticized as the TFG shaking hands with itself, Islamist leaders stay away from the talks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2007</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch accuses Ethiopian, Somali government and insurgent forces of war crimes, and the UN Security Council of indifference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**September 2007**
- ICU remnants and other opposition figures form the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) in Asmara and campaign for the withdrawal of Ethiopia and a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

**October 2007**
- Ethiopian forces fire on demonstrators in Mogadishu protesting the presence of foreign invaders. It is the heaviest fighting reported in Mogadishu since April, causing further displacement. As Ethiopians increase forces in the city Prime Minister Ghebi resigns.

**November 2007**
- President Yusuf appoints Nur Hassan Hussein (‘Nur Adde’) prime minister, who announces his readiness to talk with the opposition. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ahmedou Ould Abdallah describes Somalia’s humanitarian crisis as the worst in Africa, with 1 million displaced and 200,000 fleeing the capital in the previous two weeks.

**January 2008**
- Burundi becomes the second nation to contribute troops to AMISOM, sending 440 soldiers to Mogadishu.

**April 2008**
- The EU calls for international efforts to tackle piracy off the Somali coast after a series of hijackings and attacks on vessels.
- Aden Hashi ‘Ayro’, leader of Al Shabaab, is killed by US airstrikes in Dusamareb. Al Shabaab warn that all foreigners are legitimate targets, thus threatening humanitarian agencies and restricting humanitarian space.

**May 2008**
- The UN Security Council unanimously votes to allow countries to send warships into Somalia’s territorial waters to tackle piracy.

**June 2008**
- Talks between the TFG and ARS begin in Djibouti, resulting in agreement on a three-month ceasefire. The deal provides for Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia within 120 days. It is rejected by Hassan Dahir Aweys, who says the ICU will not stop fighting until all foreign troops have left country.

**August 2008**
- The Djibouti Agreement between the TFG and the ARS is formally signed.

**October 2008**
- Coordinated suicide bombings in Hargeisa and Bosasso target government, Ethiopian and UN offices.

**December 2008**
- Ethiopia announces plans to withdraw all forces by end of 2008. President Abdullahi Yusuf resigns after his attempt to sack Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein is declared unconstitutional by Parliament.

**2009 January**
- In Puntland Dr Abdirahman Mohamed Farole is elected the fourth president of Puntland Federal State of Somalia by the Puntland parliament. In Djibouti Sheikh Sharif is elected TFG president by an expanded TFG parliament, including an additional 275 MPs from the opposition ARS. The transitional period is extended by two years. Ethiopian forces withdraw from Somalia.

**February 2009**
- President Ahmed appoints Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, son of a former president, as the new prime minister. Sheikh Sharif returns to Mogadishu to a warm welcome. The Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama, armed by Ethiopia, exact a defeat on Al Shabaab in the central regions. There is intense fighting between the TFG and insurgents.

**April 2009**
- President Sharif pushes through the introduction of Shari’a law, with final presidential approval in May 2009.

**May 2009**
- Hassan Dahir Aweys returns to Somalia, announces opposition to Sharif’s ‘unity’ government, establishes Hizbul Islamiya, which with Al Shabab launches an offensive against the government. Intense conflict begins in Mogadishu with insurgent forces in the ascendant.

**June 2009**
- The US government announces that it is supplying weapons to the TFG. Somalia’s minister for security and more than 20 other people are killed in a suicide bombing at a hotel in Beledweyne, north of the capital Mogadishu. President Ahmed declares a state of emergency as violence intensifies. Somali officials appeal to neighbouring countries to send troops to Somalia.

**September 2009**
- Insurgent forces experience their first reversal producing a stalemate in the conflict.
- Somaliland presidential elections already rescheduled to September 2009 are postponed for the 3rd time, leading to a temporary suspension of parliament and street protests in Hargeisa. A massive car bomb kills AMISOM troops in Mogadishu. Aid agencies say some four million people in Somalia – more than a third of the population – are in need of food aid.

**October 2009**
- Al Shabab wins control over the southern port city of Kismayo, defeating the rival Hizbul Islamiya Islamist militia.