



Building Forensic capacity in Somalia



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3rd FORENSIC DNAforAFRICA SYMPOSIUM

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Overview



- ❑ SOMJUST programme
- ❑ Strategies to boosting forensic investigations
- ❑ National Forensic Plan



Mogadishu



1990s civil war images of Mogadishu - Somalia's Capital City



Credit: IMAGO / Aurora Photos



Credit: Warsameh/AP Photo



The Somali spelling - Muqdisho



A different narrative and pictures are on display





SOMJUST



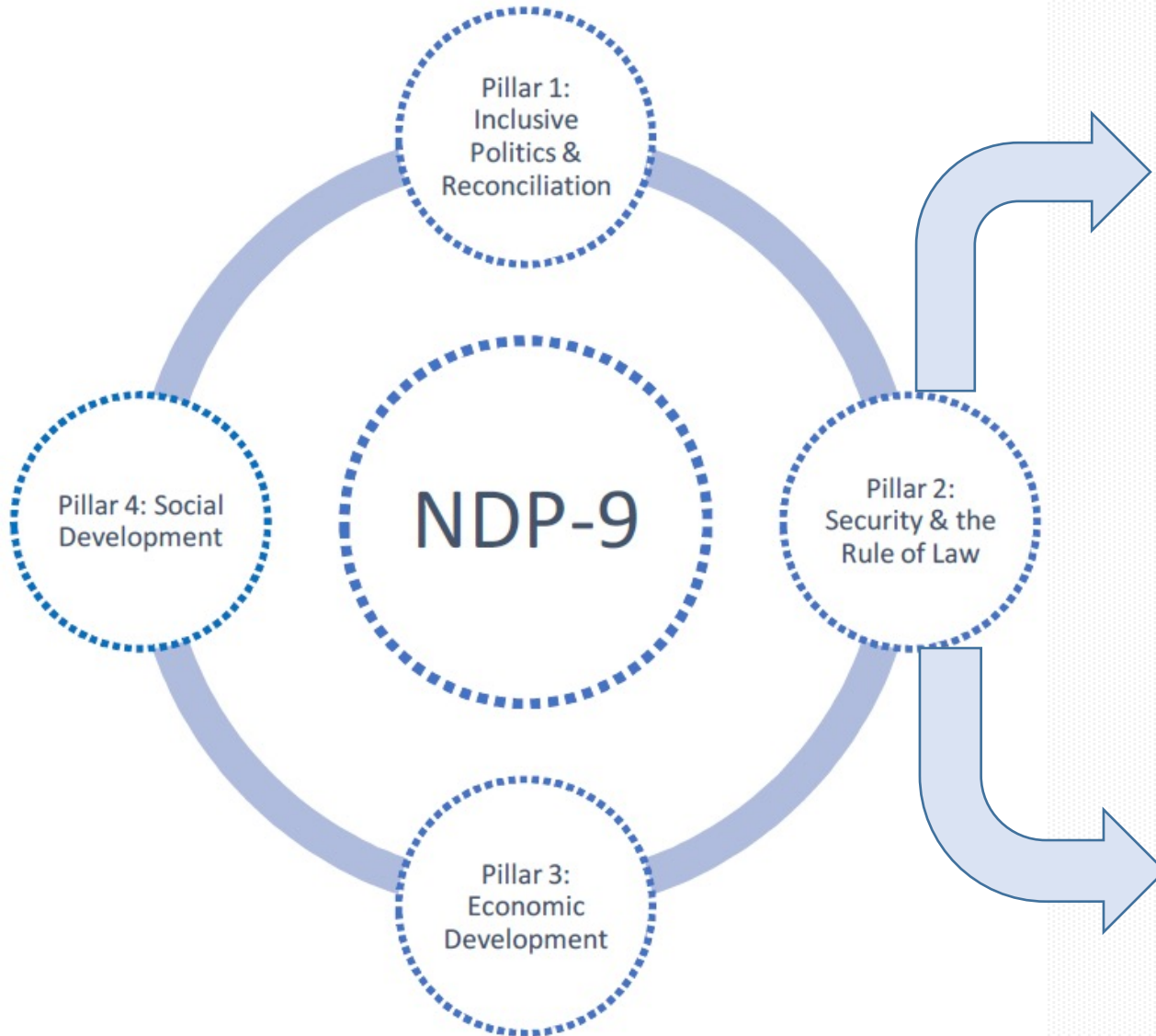
The **Office of the Attorney General** has initiated the **Somalia Justice Support Programme (SOMJUST)** in partnership with

- **IDLO** (International Development Law Organization) and
 - **INL** (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs)
- **Forensic capacity building initiative**





Somalia's National Development Priorities (2020 – 2024)



Pillar 2 envisages security institutions that serve the expectations of its citizens by respecting, protecting, and promoting their fundamental rights, thus ensuring security and stability. Rule of law and justice sector reform aims to provide secure and equitable access to affordable justice and increase public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

SOMJUST program aims to contribute to enabling criminal justice institutions to deliver on this!

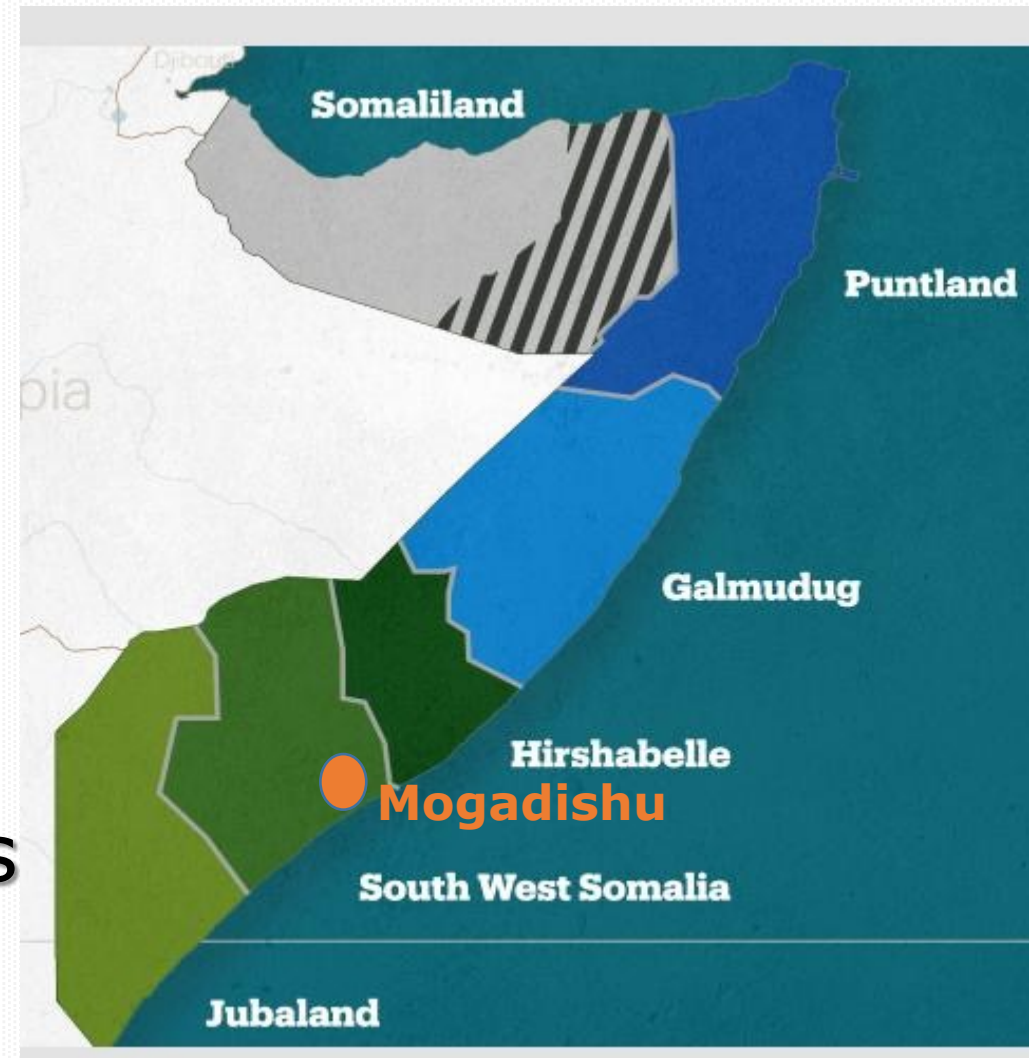


Need to harmonize forensic activities



Somalia is a Federal Republic
With

- **Five** federal member states and **one** federally administered region
[Somaliland is currently outside the federal system]
- **Separate Police forces** with differing capacity and procedures in conducting forensic criminal investigations exist





Forensic DNA Laboratory

Puntland Bureau of Forensic Science



- First-of-its-kind forensic bureau in Somalia
- Established 6 years ago (2017)
- In its short existence, has achieved landmarks in Somalia's history
 - Generated first DNA profiles done inside Somalia (February 2020)





Forensic Science Laboratory – Mogadishu



- Under the Federal Police Force's CID department
- Lab has several sections
- The Ballistics lab is the main section





Our Strategy to Boosting Forensic Investigations



National Forensic Expert (NFE)

- A holistic approach
- As the old saying goes - *Forensic science starts at crime scene and ends at court room*
- **NFE** coordinates forensic science activities in the country
- International Forensic Expert also brought in to provide technical and advisory support



National Forensic Forum



- Recently established **National Forensic Forum**
- **Jointly chaired by** Federal Attorney General, Federal Chief Justice and Federal Police Commissioner
- **A platform** that brings together key actors and decision makers within Somalia's forensic science services



Includes **international agencies** in the field that operate in Somalia



Mapping Exercise



The initial phase of SOMJUST is a research-based **mapping exercise** to identify and assess:

- The capacity of Forensic activities in the country
- The forensic **needs and gaps** in the country
- To identify legal and logistical gaps which are preventing effective forensic processes in the country.
 - The outcome of this exercise will be the basis for the recommendations on the way forward



Secure Evidence Facilities



- Establishment of **secure storage facilities** for forensic evidence at criminal investigation department offices
- Improved logistical arrangements for the transfer of evidence from crime scenes to labs
- Forensic work is often hampered by a difficult logistics chain for evidence transportation due to the armed conflict and security instability in the country



CID officers



- Capacity building segment aimed at **criminal investigating officers** (CIDs)
- The use of scientifically based methods for the **collection and preservation** of evidence
- Establishing procedures to maintain proper **chain-of-custody** to ensure authenticity and traceability of evidence





Forensic Medical Examinations



- Technical support to strengthen forensic medical examinations at government run hospitals
- Submission of evidence for DNA analysis – currently not optimal
- Collection of biological sample is crucial in obtaining the scientific proof that could support an alleged victim's rape case





Crimes related to Gender-Based Violence



- Women and girls continue to bear a heavy burden of ongoing insecurity, conflict, and lack of stability in Somalia
- Human Rights Watch report for 2022, reported an increase in incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia
- Rape cases - largely remain unprosecuted simply because often there is no scientific proof
- SOMJUST includes a targeted forensic capacity building for the frontline medical professionals



SOURCE: HRW
WORLD REPORT 2022



Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers



- Raising knowledge of judges, prosecutors, and lawyers on forensic investigations and scientific evidence
- Use of forensic evidence - DNA testing in particular - is recent to Somalia
- Able to skillfully apply the admissibility standards for forensic evidence
- Aware of the pitfalls of expert scientific evidence and opinion





National Forensic Institution



**National Forensic Laboratory –
DCI, Kenya**

- **The joint chair** (AGO, Chief Justice & Police Commissioner) agreed that a **National Forensic Institute** should be created to develop and coordinate all matters relating to forensics in Somalia.
- Development of the National Forensic Plan and strategic vision



SOMJUST's forensic capacity building, we aim to



- Improve coordination of forensic activities and services through the established National Forensic Forum
 - Provide targeted forensic capacity building to CID officers, prosecutors and judges
 - Enhance evidence integrity by establishing secure forensic storage facilities for the preservation of evidence and improve its transportation to laboratories
 - Develop a National Forensic Plan that harmonizes the Somali approach towards collecting, preserving, and analyzing forensic evidence
- A Fairer Criminal Justice System through Forensic Science



THANK YOU

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