

IT IS TIME FOR NATO TO ACT IN SOMALIA AND SUPPRESS THE *AL-SHABAB* TERRORISTS FROM DISRUPTING FAMINE RELIEF

Famine relief efforts in Somalia are being hampered by difficulties in accessing *al-Shabab* terrorist controlled areas. The *al-Shabab* terror group, controls most of the south of Somalia, including the main famine zones, and has refused to lift the ban it has imposed on several humanitarian agencies. Barred organizations include the World Food Programme, which usually leads famine responses. In February 2008, the United States added *al-Shabab* to its list of foreign terrorist organizations. *Al-Shabab* leaders have claimed affiliation with *al-Qaeda* since 2007.

The UN estimates tens of thousands have already died from hunger-related causes across Somalia. Other estimates indicate that 500,000 people, many of them children, could lose their lives due to the famine in the coming months.

The question: Why isn't NATO, including the United States, and their partners, intervening militarily in Somalia in a fashion similar to Libya? Why isn't NATO using its capabilities to interdict *al-Shabab's* ability to disrupt famine relief?

Estimates place the costs of NATO Libyan operations to date at over \$2 Billion. It would cost far less to disrupt the poorly funded *al-Shabab* terrorists in Somalia than it did to neutralize the hardened defenses, and army of the oil rich Gadhafi regime in Libya.

Estimates have placed the death toll in Libya at 30,000; similar to UN estimates of famine deaths in Somalia. The contrast, however, between Libya and Somalia is that 500,000 people, many of them children, are at risk of starvation in Somalia.

The express purpose of NATO's involvement in Libya is to protect civilians from needless loss of life. The Somali populace needs the same protection. It is time for NATO to act in Somalia, and suppress the *al-shabab* terrorists from continuing to disrupt famine relief.

By: Michael S. Pascazi, Esq.

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Pascazi Law Offices PLLC

1065 Main Street, Ste. D, Fishkill, New York 12524 U.S.A.

Ph:+1 845.897.4219 / Fax:+1 845.468.7117* E-mail:Info@pascazilaw.com*

*Service Not Accepted by Fax or E-mail

22 Avenue Pierre K oenig, 95200 Sarcelles [Paris] FRANCE** T el:+33 9.77.21.86.40

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