



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Alarming images are emerging from southern Somalia, where millions of people are starving as a result of a food crisis caused by extended drought and civil war. UN aid convoys have only just recently been granted access to the region again. African Union peacekeeping soldiers have been fighting heavy battles with the Islamic al-Shabaab militias which, up until now, have used violent force to prevent international aid organizations from carrying out their work.

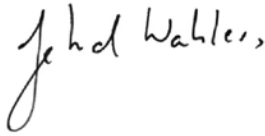
Somalia has not had a functioning central government since 1991. The population is suffering under the combined effects of a bloody civil war and recurring famines. Al-Shabaab has brought large parts of the country under its control and terrorizes the population with a strict, Sharia-based regime. Although the country's desperate youth provides the main source of new recruits for the Islamist militias, the terrorist network, which has close connections to al-Qaeda, has been pursuing an increasingly global strategy in recent years. Al-Shabaab is now also reaching out to young Muslims in western countries in an attempt to encourage them to join in the armed jihad – often with success, as is highlighted in Dirk Baehr's article in this issue.

The standoff in Somalia also affects us. Increasingly, civil wars and internal conflicts pose a threat to the security situation in Germany, however far away they often are. There is a constant risk that weak or failed countries – and these are the terms in which we have to think of Somalia – can spread instability and terrorism to other parts of the world. As a result, the fight against terror cannot just be a "passive" approach within the framework of national defenses or joint defense mechanisms within alliances.

Instead, it now quite rightly takes the form of an increasingly “active” approach within the framework of overseas and anti-terror missions, which are accompanied by development policy measures. The aim has to be to help countries back into a position in which they are once again capable of taking control of their own internal security matters. As well as providing training and support for the police and military, this also requires the promotion of civil involvement. This is because security and development go hand in hand. With its understanding of this relationship, the Rule of Law Program for Sub-Saharan Africa of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is currently expanding its level of cooperation with the Intergovernmental Authority on Democracy (IGAD), a regional bloc of countries in the Horn of Africa to which Somalia also belongs. In the future, Somalia is to be integrated in training modules for civil servants of the IGAD countries.

The German Minister of Defense, Thomas de Maizière, also drew attention to the changes in the strategic security situation in the Defense Policy Guidelines issued earlier this year in May. However, the German military can only take on some of the required roles. In addition, a form of “civil-military cooperation” is needed to coordinate all of the different groups and military forces involved in overseas missions in the most efficient possible manner given the current financial restrictions and political uncertainties. In the process, the West must not lose sight of the wider picture. During my visit to Central Africa in June, my dialogue partners expressed their deep concern at the disastrous impact of al-Shabaab in Somalia. The famine has now helped the Islamic militias into the spotlight of international attention.

It is in the interests of the people in Somalia that the aid and support provided by the West should now be used to enter a dialogue with the moderate, non-internationalist wing of al-Shabaab. A military solution alone could not solve the problems in Somalia. The piracy off the region's coasts and the terrorism on the mainland must be tackled via development policy measures. The key here is to establish contact with whoever is available as a dialogue partner for the parties involved in development cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary General

gerhard.wahlers@kas.de