

Institution: SOAS
Unit of Assessment: 24B Anthropology and Development Studies: Development Studies
Title of case study: Championing and Progressing the Campaign to Protect Remittance Flows between the UK and the Somali Territories (Laura Hammond and Anna Lindley)
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Remittances to the Somali territories and money transfer companies in the region have long been viewed with distrust by banking regulators, who see them as a conduit for terrorist financing. SOAS research into remittance flows in the Somali territories helps address such distrust, revealing that remittances are used primarily for basic needs, while larger donations finance projects that contribute to the re-building of a region riven by conflict. Following a decision by Barclays to close accounts of UK money service providers operating in Somali territories, SOAS research has been critical to an NGO-led campaign garnering widespread support to keep remittance channels open.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>SOAS research on remittances to the Somali territories has been conducted by Drs Laura Hammond and Anna Lindley, who joined SOAS in 2007 and 2010 respectively. Hammond's research interests include food security, conflict, forced migration and diasporas, regionally focused on the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia and Somalia, where she lived between 1993 and 1999. She began researching outward, voluntary and forced migration from Somali territories in 1998 and soon became interested in how remittances not only provided a lifeline for those who remained in the Horn, but also facilitated and strengthened long-distance social relationships. This interest motivated the writing of her 2010 article (output e), which examines the pressures placed upon Somali immigrants and refugees to support relatives back home, while simultaneously highlighting how remittances inform the life decisions of both senders and receivers. This work is mutually reinforced by the research of Lindley, whose 2010 monograph (output f) showcases her complementary approach, and has enabled fruitful collaborations and exchanges of ideas with Hammond.</p> <p>Hammond's initial work on remittances heavily informed her subsequent role as Team Leader on a major international collaborative study on diaspora organisations, commissioned by UNDP-Somalia, the principal output of which was an extensive 2011 co-authored report (output d). The study, based on quantitative and qualitative research undertaken across the Somali territories and in six global cities with large diaspora communities, investigates how remittances provide vital funding for relief and development activities. Hammond further examines remittance destinations in a 2012 article (output c), arguing that the victory of an opposition candidate in the 2010 Somaliland presidential elections owed much to donations and expertise provided by the diaspora.</p> <p>Hammond's most significant output, however, is the 2013 report commissioned by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), 'Family Ties: Remittances and Livelihoods Support in Puntland and Somaliland'. Hammond was the Principal Investigator and Lead Author on this study that assesses the demographics of remittance receivers, the economic and social impacts of remittances, and the timings of remittance flows. She gained unprecedented access to data held by Dahabshiil, the largest money transfer company operating in the Somali territories, and conducted a survey of 718 families in urban and rural Somaliland and Puntland. The research built on extant urban-centred studies of remittance receipts and spending habits to demonstrate that rural economies too are heavily influenced by remittances, which are often shared throughout communities, and are largely used to meet basic needs.</p> <p>By underlining the centrality of remittances to supporting the livelihoods of Somalis as well as broader relief and development activities, this research challenges the view that diaspora groups</p>

primarily serve factional interests and that money service businesses (MSBs) potentially buttress terrorism and/or conflict. Instead it argues that remittances are crucial to sustaining and re-building a region ravaged by decades of violent conflict and political unrest, and promotes a more nuanced understanding of the use of money channelled from the Somali diaspora.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- a. "Family Ties: Remittances and Livelihoods Support in Puntland and Somaliland." Report commissioned by UN's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, 2013.
- b. "Somali Transnational Activism and Integration in the UK: Mutually Supporting Strategies." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39/6 (2013): 1001-17.
- c. "The Absent but Active Constituency: The Role of the Somaliland UK Community in Electoral Politics." In *Global Migration and Transnational Processes*, edited by Peter Mandaville and Terrence S. Lyons, 227-59. London: Hurst & Co, 2012.
- d. et al. "Cash and Compassion: The Role of the Somali Diaspora in Relief, Development and Peace-Building." Report commissioned by UNDP-Somalia, 2011.
- e. "Obliged to Give: Remittances and the Maintenance of Transnational Networks Between Somalis 'At Home' and Abroad." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 10 (2010): 125-51. (Also published in French as "L'Obligation du don: envois de fonds et réseaux transnationaux entre Somaliens demeurés au pays et Somaliens à l'étranger." In *Les Migrations internationales contemporaines: Une dynamique complexe au cœur de la globalisation*, edited by François Crépeau, Delphine Nakache, and Idil Atak, 277-308. Montreal: University of Montreal Press, 2009.)
- f. Lindley, Anna. *The Early Morning Phone Call: Somali Refugees Remittances*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In May 2013, Barclays bank announced its decision to close the accounts of UK MSBs operating in Somali territories, following an international crackdown by regulators on banks whose intermediaries might link them to the funding of terrorism (1, below). As the only remaining large UK bank to hold such accounts, Barclays' actions threaten to sever the financial lifeline for millions of Somalis who rely on remittances to meet their basic needs, and will severely hinder re-building of the region.

Hammond's report and earlier SOAS research have made a significant contribution to efforts made by charities, NGOs and Somali diaspora communities to raise awareness of the pivotal role of remittances in the Somali territories, and the potential humanitarian disaster that could result from Barclays' decision. Scott Paul, Oxfam America's Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor focusing on East Africa, confirms Hammond's contribution, stating that her FSNAU report greatly informed Oxfam's global campaign to persuade banks and policymakers to develop new regulations for MSBs that would keep the remittance channel open (2):

"Her FSNAU report answered many questions that we were previously unable to answer, adding depth to the information we had. We have used the statistics from it in our top-line messaging, which has helped us to publicise how remittances are used to meet very basic needs, often in rural areas. Her research thus broke new ground and de-bunked the myth that remittances tend to go to wealthy urban dwellers who could otherwise survive without them. Before the FSNAU report, we could not say with confidence that the threat to remittances was a humanitarian issue. It gave us the confidence to put out campaign messages against the closure of the accounts of MSBs".

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The report's findings have also been cited widely by journalists covering the story, particularly Mary Harper, Africa Editor at the BBC World Service with a special interest in Somalia, who has relied extensively on Hammond's research in her own writing and broadcasting on the subject (3, 4):

"The FSNAU report was particularly valuable to me. The statistics were very, very useful when trying to break and back up a story on the closure of remittance services. Hammond's data adds immense weight to my journalism and makes what I have to say more credible".

Hammond herself has been directly involved in an international campaign to protect remittance flows to the Somali territories, together with Somali community members, the Somali Money Services Association, journalists and other academics. A key aspect of the campaign was Hammond's letter to the FCO urging it to request that Barclays extend the deadline for closing accounts, to help Somali MSBs find alternative banking partners, and to convene discussions to develop enhanced due diligence mechanisms for MSBs. Over a hundred international academics, researchers and aid practitioners signed the letter in just 48 hours, and an online e-petition was signed by over 100,000 people. Linked to the campaign, Hammond was cited in and interviewed by BBC World (TV), BBC Business Report (Radio), BBC London TV, Al Jazeera (TV), *The Economist* (6), the *Guardian* (7), and the *Wall Street Journal* (8), among numerous others (9). Barclays' Chief Executive responded to Hammond's letter, outlining the reasons for the closure, and the bank later extended its deadline by one month on two occasions, a decision partly motivated by pressure from the campaign. In November 2013, Dahabshiil successfully obtained an injunction preventing Barclays from terminating its account, pending a full trial in 2014. Moreover, in October 2013, it was announced that DFID will be progressing a pilot project to secure remittance channels to Somalia, while the UK government will form an Action Group on Cross-Border Remittances.

Abdirashid Duale, CEO of Dahabshiil, the largest MSB operating in the Somali territories, attests to Hammond's important role in the campaign and in countering negative perceptions of MSBs (10):

"Dr Hammond's work and efforts have been invaluable to the Somali community. Her research has made a significant contribution to raising awareness of how remittances constitute a lifeline for receivers in the Somali territories. Her involvement in the campaign helped to develop public understanding of the issue and it definitely contributed to Barclays' decision to extend its deadline. Her research also helped to shed light on how Dahabshiil operates, therefore challenging the view that companies like ours support terrorism. Her dedication has gone beyond the academic and her efforts are truly appreciated".

Hammond's research into the little-understood remittance pipeline to the Somali territories reveals how money from abroad contributes to the recovery of one of the world's longest-running failed states. The accessibility of her work has facilitated its use by NGOs, charities and diaspora groups in their fight to protect the remittance flow, thereby influencing policymakers and banks globally. Moreover, Hammond's personal involvement in the campaign illustrates her devotion to her work; as Mary Harper has noted: "She is more than an academic – she is able to communicate with the wider public and is actively involved in the issues about which she writes."

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. BBC News article on Barclays' decision to close accounts of money transfer businesses in Somalia: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23030943> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
2. Scott Paul, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor, Oxfam America.
3. Mary Harper, Africa Editor at the BBC World Service and author of *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*. London: Zed Books, 2013.
4. Mary Harper blog post on remittances to Somalia, featuring Laura Hammond's letter to

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Barclays and the Chief Executive's response, as well as information on the remittance crisis more broadly: <http://mary-harper.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/somalias-lifeline-under-threat.html> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].

5. Ministerial statement outlining the UK government's proposed action regarding the protection of remittance flows: <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/October%202013/10%20October/2.CHANCELLOR-money-service-businesses.pdf> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
6. Laura Hammond cited in *The Economist*: <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21581995-western-worries-about-money-laundering-are-threatening-economic-lifeline> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
7. Laura Hammond cited in the *Guardian*: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/jun/24/somalis-barclays-remittance?CMP=tw_t_gu [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
8. Dahabshiil press release in the *Wall Street Journal*: <http://online.wsj.com/article/PR-CO-20130624-908297.html> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
9. Laura Hammond article on the remittance crisis in *African Arguments* website: <http://africanarguments.org/2013/07/09/somali-money-transfer-barclays-decision-threatens-efforts-to-build-lasting-peace-and-security-by-laura-hammond/> [Most recently accessed 20.11.13].
10. Mr Abdirashid Duale, CEO of Dahabshiil