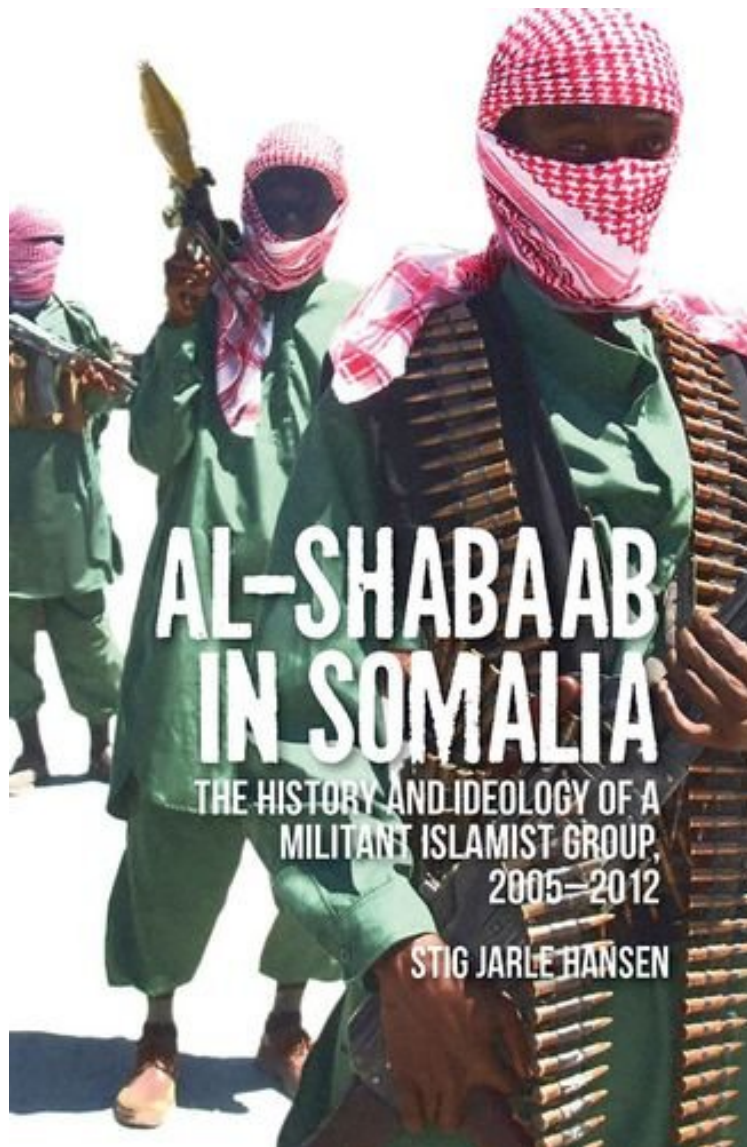


(Free pdf) Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group

# Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group

*Stig Jarle Hansen*

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**Stig Jarle Hansen : Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group:

Since early 2007 a new breed of combatants has appeared on the streets of Mogadishu and other towns in Somalia: the 'Shabaab', or youth, the only self-proclaimed branch of al-Qaeda to have gained acceptance (and praise) from Ayman al-Zawahiri and 'AQ centre' in Afghanistan. Itself an offshoot of the Islamic Courts Union, which split in 2006, Shabaab has imposed Sharia law and is also heavily influenced by local clan structures within Somalia itself. It remains an infamous and widely discussed, yet little-researched and understood, Islamist group. Hansen's remarkable book attempts to go beyond the media headlines and simplistic analyses based on alarmist or localist narratives and, by employing intensive field research conducted within Somalia, as well as on the ground interviews with Shabaab leaders themselves, explores the history of a remarkable organisation, one that has survived predictions of its collapse on several occasions. Hansen portrays al-Shabaab as a hybrid Islamist organization that combines a strong streak of Somali nationalism with the rhetorical obligations of international jihadism, thereby attracting a not insignificant number of foreign fighters to its ranks. Both these strands of Shabaab have been inadvertently boosted by Ethiopian, American and African Union attempts to defeat it militarily, all of which have come to nought.

"Essential reading. . . Hansen focuses on the complex ideological detours and military tactics of the Shabab from its inception. . . a succinct and definitive history."--The Economist"Exceptional. . . deserves a broad readership?"--Foreign Affairs"A judicious and timely study of a poorly understood militant Islamist group. A brave attempt to both historicize and scrutinize Al-Shabaab, it is a must-read for anyone wishing to understand a group that has unleashed havoc in parts of Africa."--African Affairs"Hansen has travelled widely through Somalia for years and is personally familiar with many of the members and leaders of the movement. As a result, his description of events carries a powerful sense of legitimacy. [He] has put together a remarkably a remarkably detailed account of al-Shabaab's history [and] until the distant and unlikely day when something better comes along, Al-Shabaab in Somalia is the definitive book on the subject."--Parameters:The US Army War College Quarterly"An intimidatingly impressive book. No one else has amassed this level of detail and matched it with analysis. Stig Jarle Hansen knows more about the positions, decompositions and recompositions of Al-Shabaab than any Western scholar. This book is a real service to us all."--The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Studies"If you want to understand the reality of the Al-Shabaab phenomenon in Somalia, its existence in the country and its grounding in that ravaged land, this short book, written by a researcher who actually engaged in person with his research topic, will provide you with more concrete nourishment than a whole raft of official reports."--Grard Prunier, author of Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe"Unlike the legion of ivory-tower academics, armchair analysts, and self-promoting pundits who have expatiated about Al-Shabaab without even having set foot anywhere near Somalia, much less ever encountering an adherent of the group, Stig Jarle Hansen is a charter member of the small band of intrepid scholars who, even at the height of the insurgency, still pursued their research in the country, their work consistently informed by direct knowledge of actors and events. His is a comprehensive and accessible treatment of a significant subject. Highly recommended."--J. Peter Pham, Director, Michael S. Ansari Africa Center, Atlantic Council, and Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of the Middle East and Africa"Using previously neglected sources such as YouTube clips, Al-Shabaab publications, and websites sympathetic to the group, the author highlights the impossibility of studying Al-Shabaab 'without grasping Somali clan politics and the local historical background. . . This is a judicious and timely study of a poorly understood militant Islamic group. It is a must-read for anyone wishing to understand a group that has unleashed havoc in parts of Africa." -- African Affairs"This brief synopsis of Al-Shabaab is a thoroughly enjoyable read behind the group that has caused so much turmoil in East Africa. Logically organized chronologically, the book covers the early rise of Al-Shabaab (something very few in the West were aware of) to the present day. The author has extensive field experience in Somalia and the immersion expertise is evident in the writing." --CHOICE "Hansen's volume is an extraordinary work. The detail he brings to the founding, evolution, ideology, and operations within his study of a currently operating terror group is inspiring and deserves the highest praise. There is an argument to be made that this is a unique work that could only have been made by a scholar of Hansen's abilities and talents, especially given his linguistic abilities and connections within Somalia."--H-Net>About the AuthorStig Jarle Hansen is an associate professor at the University of Life Sciences in Oslo where he teaches Norway's only MA in International Relations. He speaks Somali, Swahili and Arabic.