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# Between 'Dirty Money' and 'Development Capital': Somali Money Transfer Infrastructure Under Global Scrutiny

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## Abstract

Money transfer infrastructures have come to play a prominent role in the Somali regions, connecting war-torn cities, refugee camps, and remote rural areas with the rest of the world. Drawing on primary research, this article provides the first detailed history of the development of Somali money transfer infrastructure since the civil war, including its response to international intervention. The account raises issues of wider significance relating to recent debates on migrants' remittances, informal economies and conflict. In particular, the money transfer story demonstrates how crisis can become an opportunity for adaptive commercial actors using social ties to navigate the dangers of civil war. Meanwhile, the international community's attempts to define Somali money transfers as either dirty money or development capital demonstrate a more general ambivalence towards 'actually existing developments' in conflict-affected Africa.

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