

The Shabab militant group



Area controlled by
Shabab and Hizbul Islam



■ **Al Shabab:** Islamist militia is fighting Ethiopian and African Union (AU) forces that support UN-backed **Transitional Government of Somalia**

■ **2006: Islamic Courts Union (ICU),** led by moderate **Sharif Sheikh Ahmed**, formed as rival administration to government. Military wing fights war lords and gangs in Mogadishu

■ **Jan 2007:** ICU defeated by Ethiopian and government forces at Kismaayo. Hardliners split from ICU to form **Shabab** and **Hizbul Islam** to continue war against government



■ **May 2008:** Shabab leader **Aden Hashi Ayro** (left) killed in U.S. air strike

■ **Aug:** Shabab fighters overrun Kismaayo

■ **Jan 2009:** Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is elected Somali president – Shabab launches major assault against government in Mogadishu

Key personnel in Shabab

Ahmed Abdi Aw-Mohamed: Current leader, seriously wounded in May

Mukhtar Robow: Commander and spokesman

Issa Osman Issa: Involved in 2002 attacks on Israeli-owned hotel and Israeli airliner in Kenya

Strength: 3,000-4,000 plus 2,000 foreign fighters from Yemen, Pakistan, UK, U.S. and other African nations

Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, leader of Hizbul Islam, wants to unite his faction with Shabab, which in turn proposes joining Al Qaeda to expand global terror network