

# Aisha S. Ahmad

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## Education:

2006-exp 2012

**Doctor of Philosophy**, Candidate (ABD): Political Science, McGill University.

- Comprehensive Exams: *International Relations, Comparative Politics (developing world)*
- Dissertation: *Between the Mosque and the Market: An Economic Explanation of State Failure and State Formation in the Modern Muslim World*
- Supervisor: *Dr. Stephen Saideman*
- Committee Members: *Dr. Khalid Medani, Dr. Stuart Soroka*
- External: *Dr. Barnett Rubin*

2002 - 2003

**Master of Arts**: International Relations: Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto.

1998 – 2002

**Bachelor of Arts (hon.)**: International Relations (major), Political Science (major), Environmental Studies (minor): University of Toronto, Trinity College. *Graduated with distinction.*

## Research Interests:

Political Islam; Political Economy of civil war; Ethnic conflict; State failure; State-building; Afghanistan; Somalia; Pakistan; International Relations of the Islamic world

## Dissertation Topic:

This research asks how order can emerge out of disorder. It presents a political economy explanation of Islamic state formation in Afghanistan and Somalia, by examining two endogenous processes that emerged as a response to state failure: first, a long-term phenomenon of Islamic identity transformation within the local business community, as a mechanism to reduce transaction costs and improve access to markets; and second, a short-term strategic calculation within the business community of the cost of operating under warlord protection rackets versus the cost of financing a political Islamic alternative.

## Publications:

### *Book Chapter:*

Kizito Sabala, Aisha Ahmad and Rutto Edwin “The Somali Peace Process: from Arta to Eldoret to Mbagathi” in The Resolution of African Conflicts: The Management of Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Ohio University Press: 2008.

Publications (continued):

*Conference Papers:*

Aisha Ahmad “Holy Men and Money Lords: An Economic Explanation of Civil War Outcomes in Somalia” *African Studies Association Annual Meeting; New Fieldwork in Somali Studies Panel*: San Francisco, CA, November 18-22, 2010

Aisha Ahmad “Holy Warlords: The Rise of Islamist Movements in Failed States” *International Studies Association*: New York, NY, February 15, 2009

*Research in Progress:*

Aisha Ahmad “Economic and Political Interests in Civil War Somalia” (Under review)

Aisha Ahmad “Between the Mosque and the Market: Economic Interests and Social Change in Somalia” (Under review)

Aisha Ahmad “Corruption and Political Preferences in Afghanistan: Evaluating the Economic Drivers of Insurgent Support” (In progress)

*Published Reports:*

Aisha Ahmad “Islamic Movements in Afghanistan and Somalia: A Comparison” in Policy Perspectives (Institute for Policy Studies – Pakistan); August 2009.

Aisha Ahmad “Talking to the Enemy: Strategies for Initiating Peace Negotiations in Afghanistan” in Policy Perspectives (Institute of Policy Studies – Pakistan); Special Edition on Afghanistan, March 2007.

Aisha Ahmad “Evolving Patterns in Afghan Women’s Security: A Historical Analysis of Trends in Vulnerability, Rape Prevalence, and Legal Rights” in Policy Perspectives (Institute of Policy Studies) Volume 3, Number 1, November 2005.

Ibrahim Farah, Aisha Ahmad, and Daud Omar “Cross Border Weapons Proliferation in the Horn of Africa: the case of Mandera, Kenya, Melkasufta, Ethiopia, and Bula Hawa, Somalia” in Controlling Small Arms in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region Project Ploughshares: 2006.

Aisha Ahmad “Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration in Afghanistan: the ANBP, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, and Warlords” in The Journal of Afghanistan Studies December 2004.

Fellowships, Scholarships and Awards:

2011-2012      **Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University**, Postdoctoral Research Fellowship: Initiative on Religion in International Affairs and International Security Program

2011            **Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award**, Teaching Assistant of the Year, Political Science Students’ Association, McGill University

Fellowships, Scholarships and Awards (continued):

- 2011 **McGill University, Arts Graduate Research Award:** \$4,500 for field research in Somaliland
- 2010-2012 **Security and Defence Forum, Department of National Defence;** Doctoral Scholarship: \$40,000CAD.
- 2009 **Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy;** Doctoral Fellowship: USD\$5,000 for research on Pakistan and Afghanistan
- 2009-2010 **International Development Research Centre;** Doctoral Research Award: \$19,000CAD for field research in Somalia and Kenya
- 2008-2010 **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council;** Doctoral Fellowship: \$40,000CAD
- 2008-2009 **Centre for Developing and Area Studies, McGill University;** Graduate Field Research Award: \$3,000CAD
- 2008 **Centre for Developing and Area Studies, McGill University;** Graduate Fellowship: \$1,000CAD
- 2008 **McGill University;** Arts Graduate Student Travel Award: \$1,000CAD
- 2007 **McGill University;** Graduate Studies Award: \$10,000CAD
- 2006 **International Security Research and Outreach Program (ISROP), Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade;** Graduate Research Fellowship: \$5,000CAD
- 2006 **McGill University;** Recruitment Excellence Fellowship: \$5,000CAD

Teaching Experience:

*Lecture Position:*

- 2011 Course Instructor, Political Science, McGill University:  
POLI352: Foreign Policy of Africa (summer course)

*Teaching Assistantships:*

- 2006-2007, 2010 Teaching Assistant, Political Science, McGill University:  
POLI244: Introduction to International Relations  
POLI342: African Politics  
POLI442: International Relations of Ethnic Conflict
- 2007-2008 Teaching Assistant, University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus:  
POLB80: Introduction to International Relations  
POLB81: International Conflict and Conflict Management

### Invited Presentations:

- 2011 “Smuggling and Insurgency in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Area: A study of the informal economy in failed states” Harvard Kennedy School: Scheduled for November 28, 2011 in Cambridge, MA, USA
- 2011 “Contemporary and Future Ideas and Approaches for Peacebuilding” Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto: on October 15, 2011 in Toronto, Canada
- 2010 “Insurgent Media: Somalia and Afghanistan/Pakistan” McGill University: Delivered with Chris Anzalone on November 12, 2010
- 2009 “Transnational Civil Society and Climate Change Policy” University of Nairobi: for the course *Environment and Security* on November 19, 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya
- 2009 “The Taliban and Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan and Afghanistan” Coro Civic Center: on February 20, 2009 in Pittsburgh, USA
- 2009 “Small Arms and Light Weapons Trafficking in the Horn of Africa” McGill University: on May 20, 2009 in Montreal, Canada
- 2009 “Islamic Nationalism and State Failure: A Comparison of Social Movements in Afghanistan and Somalia” Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Public Seminar: on June 10, 2009 in Islamabad, Pakistan
- 2008 Two-part lectures: “Women and insecurity in Afghanistan” and “Understanding the Taliban and Neo-Taliban Insurgencies” Claremont Colleges on February 20, 2008 in Claremont, CA, USA
- 2006 “Canada's Role in Afghanistan Panel” NDP Panel with the Honorable Jack Layton: on October 5, 2006 in Ottawa, Canada
- 2006 “Pakistan in a Regional and International Security Context” Three-part guest lecture series Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar (Pakistan) April-May 2006 in Peshawar, Pakistan

### Professional Activities:

- 2011(current) **Director (Somalia)**, Dr. Hawa Abdi Foundation, Lafoole, Somalia
- 2010 **Research Assistant**, James J. Shinn, Princeton University, USA
- 2009 **Research Consultant (Pakistan)**, Center on International Cooperation, New York University, USA
- 2007-2009 **Research Assistant (Kenya, Somalia)**, Dr. Khalid Medani, McGill University
- 2007 **Participant**, “The Dynamics and Determinants of Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan: Implications for Counter Narcotics Strategies” International Development Research Council: Chatham House Rules Discussion Forum in Ottawa, Canada on 27 June, 2007

Professional Activities (continued):

- 2007            **Consultant**, “Security and Research in Afghanistan” International Development Research Council in Ottawa, Canada, on March 29, 2007
- 2007            **Location Fixer (Kenya, Somalia)**, for “Devil’s Bargain,” Bishari Films Inc.
- 2006-2007      **Consultant**, Dr. Gordon Smith, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute
- 2006-2007      **Country Director (Pakistan)**, Open Net Initiative, Harvard Law School, Berkman Center for Internet and Society
- 2005            **Independent Writer (Afghanistan)**, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Online News Journal, Viewpoint
- 2004-2005      **Researcher (Kenya)**, Africa Peace Forum
- 2004-2005      **Associate Researcher (Kenya, Somalia)**, Institute for International Diplomacy, University of Nairobi

References:

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Canada Research Chair in International  
Security and Ethnic Conflict  
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