

**"BLACK HAWK DOWN";**  
**THE MOVIE;**  
**SOMALIS IN TWIN CITIES PREPARE FOR REACTION;**  
**SOME FEAR FILM WON'T GIVE AUDIENCES COMPLETE STORY**

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## **Body**

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**Somalis** living in the **Twin Cities** say they are bracing for a possible backlash to the opening today of the **film** "**Black Hawk Down**," Hollywood's version of the 1993 clash between U.S. forces and Mogadishu warlords. One **Twin Cities** Somali resident said the **movie** portrays **Somalis** as "savage and pitiless beasts."

Leaders of Somali assistance agencies in the **Twin Cities**, home to the country's largest concentration of refugees from the East African country, **fear** the **film** will harm efforts to build links between **Somalis** who have resettled here and the metro area's larger population.

**Somalis** say they hope American **audiences** will realize that the people who have resettled here -- refugees from the trauma and torture of their country's decade-long civil war -- have more in common with the U.S. troops who came under heavy fire during the operation than with the militiamen the **film** shows shooting, seemingly from every rooftop and window of the Somali capital.

The **film** arrives at a sensitive time for Somali immigrants. Before Sept. 11, many struggled to find jobs and housing. Since the terrorist attacks, they have had to face new worries, from scrutiny by federal agents questioning recent immigrants to raids that closed five Somali-run money-transfer agencies in Minneapolis.

Authorities alleged the agencies, which immigrants use to send money to relatives in refugee camps, had ties to an international network supporting terrorists.

"All these people who are now living in Minneapolis and the U.S., they were victims of the warlords, too," said Mohamoud Egal, 49, a 1970s fighter pilot for the Somali air force and one of four **Twin Cities Somalis** who watched an advance screening Wednesday night at the invitation of the Pioneer Press. "They lost their belongings, they lost their fathers and mothers, they lost their brothers and sisters, most of them. They are survivors. They were thinking for a long time to reach here and get peace. I know the American people; they will know that."

The **Somalis** noted a number of inaccuracies, observing that the actors portraying throngs of **Somalis** appeared to be from other African countries and that the **city** setting bore little resemblance to Mogadishu. The **film**'s narrow focus on intense street combat, the **Somalis** said, left little room to explore the historical context of Somalia's civil war and the famine that ensued, leading to the U.S. relief mission that ended soon after the botched effort to capture two militia leaders.

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"It makes trivia out of a very tragic historic moment to both Americans and Somalis with a huge loss of life in a very confusing movie without a plot," said Omar Jamal, director of the Somali Justice Advocates Center of St. Paul, who said he had talked to police and FBI agents in the Twin Cities about his concerns of possible reprisals. "Somalis are depicted as savage and pitiless beasts without giving them any human elements and emotional faces. I think the whole message of the movie was sending is it's basically us against them."

To counter negative perceptions of Somalis that he fears may arise, Jamal said he and others will stop at box offices tonight to distribute fliers providing political background on Somalia and describing the experiences of people who were in Mogadishu when the battle occurred.

The movie was not as inflammatory as Yusuf Budle, managing editor of Horn Publishers Inc. of Minneapolis, which produces a monthly Somali newspaper, said he had feared.

"It's just telling what happened within these short hours," Budle said. "This is just a war. Nobody wins a war. Everybody fights back in a war. It's just either you kill or you die. It shows there is no hatred between this country and Somalia."

Hassan Eibakar, president of Horn Publishers, said: "The impact is what the Americans do after they see the film. Somalis are shy people, they have problems of their own. They are not in any position to do anything but just hide against possible victimization or possible harm."

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## Notes

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## Graphic

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5 Photos

- 1) Mohamoud Egal
- 2) Hassan Eibakar
- 3) Yusuf Budle
- 4) Oamr Jamal
- 5) Revolution Studios Photo

American troops descend upon Mogadishu, Somalia, in a scene from the film

"Black Hawk Down."

## Classification

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(87%); RESETTLEMENT & REPATRIATION (76%); HISTORY (73%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (72%); FAMINE  
(71%); REFUGEE & RELIEF CAMPS (71%); TERRORIST ATTACKS (66%); WIRE TRANSFERS (65%)

**Company:** PIONEER PRESS NEWSPAPERS (53%)

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**Industry:** ACTORS & ACTRESSES (78%); FAMINE (71%); WIRE TRANSFERS (65%); AIRCRAFT PILOTS (63%)

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