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COI QUERY RESPONSE

SOMALIA - INFORMATION ON AL SHABAAB INCLUDING:

FORCED MARRIAGE OF UNDERAGE GIRLS TO ITS MEMBERS;

ACTIVITIES IN BARAWAE; &

TAKING OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR MOTHERS AS A FORM OF CONTROL OVER THEIR WIVES

Information on Al Shabaab regarding forced marriage of underage girls to its members

In September 2023, the *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime* reports that “Al-Shabaab also participates in these practices, particularly in recruiting child soldiers and orchestrating sexual slavery and forced marriage.”¹

In August 2023 a report issued by the *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* states “Women are commonly recruited by Al-Shabaab through marriage, including forced and child marriage. Women are often left without choice due to family and clan pressure. Al-Shabaab has abducted and forced girls aged 14 to 20 to marry fighters, while threatening their families with violence.”²

The *UK Foreign Office* mentioned in July 2023 that “Data from the UN's Global Protection Cluster indicated a 200% rise in gender-based violence (GBV) cases in Somalia in 2022, including rape, forced marriage and female genital mutilation” [...]³

¹ Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (26 September 2023) 2023 Global Organized Crime Index - Somalia

² European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (23 August 2023) EUAA Country Guidance: Somalia - Common analysis and guidance note (August 2023) [3. Refugee status]

³ UK Foreign Office (13 July 2023) Human Rights & Democracy: The 2022 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Report – Somalia

A report issued by the *United Nations* in June 2023 states that “...in drought-affected communities, women and girls were disproportionately exposed to forced marriage, including to members of Al-Shabaab.”⁴

The *US Department of State* Trafficking reported in June 2023 in the annual report on Trafficking in Persons that “Al-Shabaab exploits women and girls in sexual slavery and forced marriage to al-Shabaab militants.”⁵

In March 2023 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on the human rights situation of 2022 which included noting “In areas under its control, al-Shabaab arranged compulsory marriages between its soldiers and young girls and used the lure of marriage as a recruitment tool for its soldiers.”⁶

In February 2023 *UN Women* reported that “Al Shabaab continues to abduct women and girls, to force families to give them their daughters to marry, and to occupy hospitals and maternity wards.”⁷

Activities in Barawae

A report published by *Committee to Protect Journalists* in September 2023 states that: “The Committee to Protect Journalists on Thursday called on Somali authorities to credibly investigate an incident in which security personnel shot at Radio Baraawe and to create safe conditions for its journalists to return to work. On the evening of August 12, Radio Baraawe director Osman Aweys Bahar heard gunshots outside the broadcaster's offices in Barawe, the capital of Somalia's South-West State. Osman and two other witnesses, who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity due to safety concerns, said they climbed onto the building's roof and saw about four men firing guns on the street below. Osman and one of the witnesses said the men were firing at the Radio Baraawe building and when they shouted down to ask why, one gunman discharged his weapon towards the rooftop, forcing them to run inside.”⁸

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project) reports in June 2023 that: “The significant disputes in Hiiraan and Gedo regions and the clan-based clashes in Baraawe and Garowe in Puntland state, have allowed al-Shabaab militants to make movements and launch high-level attacks that threaten the continuation and expansion of the operation to Jubaland and Southwest states.”⁹

In March 2023, the *Heritage Institute for Policy Studies* states that: “In Barawe, al-Shabaab fired mortars at the polling station where the election of Southwest's second electoral constituency was underway. Four people died and five were wounded.”¹⁰

⁴ United Nations (22 June 2023) Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General (June 2023) [Somalia excerpt]

⁵ US Department of State (15 June 2023) Trafficking in Persons Report 2023: Somalia, p.5

⁶ United States Department of State (20 March 2023) 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, p.23

⁷ UN Women (22 February 2023) Amid Devastating Drought, Ongoing Rights Violations, Somalia Pushes Forward in Fight against Al-Shabaab Terror Group, Security Council Hears

⁸ Committee to Protect Journalists (14 September 2023) Somalia's Radio Baraawe off air for weeks, director in hiding after shooting

⁹ ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project) (30 June 2023) Somalia: Political Turmoil Threatens the Fight Against Al-Shabaab

¹⁰ Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (24 March 2023) State of Somalia: 2022 Report

Taking of children from their mothers as a form of control by over their wives

The *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* in August 2023 states that: “If a woman refuses the marriage, she may face consequences such as being banished from the nomadic community or being denied child custody or property. Girls and women who have been forcefully married rarely come forward to get help due to fear of social stigma and punishment.”¹¹

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<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/human-rights-democracy-2022-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-21>

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¹¹ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (23 August 2023) *EUAA Country Guidance: Somalia - Common analysis and guidance note (August 2023) [3. Refugee status]*, p.48

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New Humanitarian

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

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