

Somalia: Country Focus





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Cover photo: Daily life in Somalia – Women walk on the street, as seen from the window of an armoured car on 22 April 2025 in Mogadishu, Somalia. Credit: Ed Ram, © Getty Images, 2025, <https://www.gettyimages.it/detail/fotografie-di-cronaca/women-walk-on-the-street-as-seen-from-the-window-fotografie-di-cronaca/2211500880?adppopup=true>

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The review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of the EUAA.





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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#).¹ The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 11 April 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

¹ EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)



Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
4.5 power-sharing formula	A power-sharing formula under which key positions in the state and parliamentary seats are allocated on a proportional basis across the 4 major clans and 0.5 to minorities
<i>Adoon</i>	Slave
<i>Af-Maay</i>	Somali dialect spoken in parts of southern and central Somalia, including the inter-riverine region
<i>Af-Mahaa</i>	Standard Somali language
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
<i>Amniyat</i>	Al-Shabaab's intelligence wing
AS	Al-Shabaab, militant Islamist organisation in Somalia
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah, the multi-clan armed Sufi group
ATMIS	African Transition Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
AUSSOM	African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia
<i>Badeeco</i>	Goods
<i>Bajaaj</i>	Three-wheeled motor rickshaws also known as Tuk-Tuk
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
<i>Bandar</i>	Port, harbour
<i>Berket</i> (plural <i>berkedo</i>)	Water catchment
<i>Bi'da</i>	Innovations in Islamic law that are seen as deviating from established practices



<i>Bikro</i>	A concept meaning that ‘there is honour in husbands having difficulty penetrating their wives on their wedding night as it indicates purity or virginity’
<i>Bir ma geydo</i>	Somali for ‘spared from the spear’
BRA	Benadir Regional Administration
Casualty	A person who is killed, wounded or incapacitated
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
<i>Dadka laga tirade badan yahay</i>	Minority, literally people who are small in numbers
<i>Dalag</i>	Agricultural produce
<i>Darwish, Dervish</i>	State level armed forces/militias/paramilitary/special police
<i>Degan</i>	Clan-homeland
<i>Dhaqan celis</i>	Somali for return to culture
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
<i>Diya</i>	Payment of compensation (see also <i>mag</i> or <i>jilib</i>)
DSA	Detailed site assessment
<i>Fatwa</i>	A legal ruling on a point of Islamic law (Sharia) given by a qualified Islamic jurist in response to a specific question or issue
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
<i>Fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence, referring to the science of understanding and applying the principles of Sharia (Islamic law)
FMS	Federal Member State
<i>Foosto</i>	Water container of about 200 liters





<i>Gadiid</i>	Transit
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
<i>Gibil cad</i>	Light-skinned
<i>Gibil madow</i>	Dark-skinned
<i>Godob reeb, or godobtiir</i>	In the context of clan conflicts/feuds, the tradition of compensating the victim's group with one or more unmarried girls from the murder's family who are offered for marriage
<i>Hadd crimes (plural huduud)</i>	Crimes that are 'against the rights of God' under Islamic religious law
<i>Halal</i>	Anything that is permitted or lawful according to Islamic law
<i>Hanbali</i>	One of the two main Sharia schools (<i>madhab</i>) present in Somalia
<i>Haram</i>	Actions, behaviours, foods, or practices that are forbidden by Islamic law
<i>Haramcad</i>	Turkish-trained police force also known as <i>Cheetah</i>
<i>Hiraba</i>	Islamic law legal category that comprises highway robbery rape, and terrorism
<i>Hisba</i>	Religious duty of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong'
HSM	Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Directorate
<i>Infaq</i>	In principle, the Islamic practice of generosity and charitable giving as a voluntary act; in the context of this report, local tax imposed by Al-Shabaab and based on need
<i>Isbaaro</i>	Somali for checkpoint
<i>Isbaaro soo booda</i>	Somali for temporary or pop-up checkpoints
ISIS or ISS	Islamic State in Somalia





ISIS-Somalia	Islamic State in Somalia, or ISS; a Somalia-based affiliate of the Iraq/Syria-based IS (also called the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant/Syria (ISIS), or Daesh)
<i>Jaish al-hisba or Hisbah</i>	Armed force that Al-Shabaab uses as both police and a morality enforcement force
<i>Jareer</i>	Somali for curly hair
<i>Jingad</i>	Shack, makeshift or informal dwelling, typically constructed using readily available materials like mud, wood, or corrugated metal
JISA	Jubbaland Intelligence and Security Agency
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
<i>Khaniis</i>	Somali term used to designate all LGBTQI+ persons
<i>Khat</i>	Khat (<i>Catha edulis</i>) is a flowering shrub native to East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and used as a recreational drug
<i>Kufar</i>	Arabic for unbelievers
<i>Laan dheere</i>	Long genealogies
<i>Maamulka ridada</i>	The government of apostasy
Macawisley	Communal militia
<i>Madhab</i>	Sharia school
<i>Mag</i>	Payment of compensation (see also <i>diya</i>)
<i>Malcaamad</i>	Koranic school
MEDA	Minority Empowerment and Development Agency
<i>Mooryaan</i>	Somali for bandits
<i>Mufsid fil-ard</i>	In an Islamic context, spreading corruption in the land
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
PISA	Puntland Intelligence and Security Agency





PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force
PRADO	Public Register of Authentic identity and travel Documents Online
PRMN	Protection and Return Monitoring Network
PSF	Puntland Security Forces
<i>Qaad or Jaad, or Mira</i>	Somali for Khat, also known as Mira (particularly in Swahili)
<i>Qadi</i>	Muslim judge who administers Islamic law in a Sharia court. They also have extrajudicial functions like mediation and guardianship
<i>Qisas</i>	Retaliation under Sharia law
<i>Saab</i>	Name for the <i>Rahanweyn/Digil-Mirifle</i> clan family (after their ancestor Saabe)
<i>Sab</i>	Minority group, occupational caste
<i>Samaale</i>	Somali ancestor for Somali clans (<i>Dir, Isaaq, Darood, Hawiye</i>)
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
<i>Shafi'i (Shafi's)</i>	One of the two main Sharia schools (<i>madhab</i>) present in Somalia
<i>Sharia (Shari'a', Sharia'ah)</i>	The Islamic law
SHDS	Somali Health and Demographic Survey
<i>Sheikh</i>	In Somalia, common honorific used for respected individuals, particularly senior religious leaders and scholars knowledgeable about Sharia law
SJS	Somali Journalists Syndicate
SNA	Somali National Army
SSC	Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn
<i>Ta'zīr</i>	Ordinary crime
<i>Takfir/Takfiir</i>	Declaring other Muslims as infidels because they do not adhere to certain behaviour





TFG	Transitional Federal Government
<i>Ulama</i>	Men of knowledge well versed in Muslim religious sciences (e.g. Qur'an, hadīth, fiqh)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
<i>Xeer</i>	Customary (clan) law
<i>Xidid</i>	Root
<i>Xoolo</i>	Livestock
<i>Zakat or zakah, or zakawat in Somali</i>	Religious tax under Islamic law
<i>Zina</i>	Unlawful sexual intercourse under Islamic law



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. Moreover, the report is intended to inform the update of EUAA's country guidance on Somalia (2025).

The report provides an update on relevant profiles and key-socio economic indicators across the country as of March 2025. It builds upon preceding EUAA COI reports, notably the [Somalia: Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#) from February 2023,² EUAA COI query [Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM](#) (April 2023),³ as well as reports on [Targeted profiles](#),⁴ [Key socio-economic indicators](#),⁵ and [Actors](#),⁶ which were published in the period July-September 2021.

Methodology

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference of this report build on previous EUAA reporting on the same topic, internal and external consultations with experts, the EUAA network members, and draw from the relevant most recent literature on the topic. Additionally, national asylum authorities of EU+ countries⁷ belonging to the Country Guidance Network on Somalia were surveyed on their needs and their input was taken on-board in the design of these terms of reference. Feedback and suggestions were then formulated into the final version that can be found in [Annex II](#).

The reference period for this report is from 1 April 2023 to 30 March 2025, but also includes general information to provide background and contextual information to the current situation. The drafting period finished on 11 April 2025, peer review occurred between 14 and 23 April 2025, and additional information was added to the report as a result of the quality review process during the review implementation up until 30 April 2025. The report was internally reviewed subsequently.

Collecting information

This report is based on publicly available information in electronic and paper-based sources gathered through desk-based research, as well as on interviews with key sources.

Research on Somalia is challenging due to lack of reporting, security issues, and undercurrent trends. This report also contains information from multiple oral sources with ground-level

² EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#)

³ EUAA, COI query Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM, 21 April 2023, [url](#)

⁴ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

⁵ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

⁶ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

⁷ EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland



knowledge of the situation in Somalia who were interviewed or consulted specifically for this report. In some cases, sources were unwilling to go on record. The report also makes ample reference to previous EUAA reports and key statements contained there whenever still relevant.

Both interviewed and written sources used are referenced in the Annex I: [Bibliography](#). Wherever information could not be found within the timeframes for drafting this report, this is stated in the relevant section of the report.

Quality control

This report was written by the EUAA COI Sector and international expert Markus Hoehne in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)⁸ and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).⁹

The report has been peer-reviewed by COI experts from ACCORD, international expert Markus Hoehne, as well as internally by the EUAA COI Sector. All the comments from reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 21 May 2025.

Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: academic publications, think tank reports, and specialised sources covering Somalia; COI reports by governments; information from civil society and NGOs; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Somali and regionally-based media.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, multiple oral sources, including experts who had contributed to previous production on Somalia, were contacted for this report. The types of oral sources contacted include: scholars, international experts, Somali experts, development practitioners, and sources based in Somalia with reliable knowledge of the situation on the ground. Some sources who were interviewed chose to remain anonymous for security reasons. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current ground-level knowledge. They were interviewed in the period February 2025 – March 2025. All oral sources are described in the [Bibliography](#).

Structure and use of the report

The report is divided into two parts: Section 1. Profiles, and Section 2. Socio-economic situation in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and Garowe.

⁸ EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

⁹ EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)





- In Section 1, the report provides an update on profiles potentially relevant for international protection in Somalia as of March 2025. While the list of addressed profiles is not exhaustive, for each profile information is provided on its description, those involved in perpetrating harm (where available), the types of treatment documented among sources consulted, and potential state recourse mechanisms, including effectiveness.
- In Section 2, the report provides an update on key socio-economic indicators with focus on three Somali cities: Mogadishu, Garowe, and Hargeisa. Each part provides an overview as well as details about demographic/clan composition, humanitarian issues, mobility and accessibility, socio-economic indicators, and social networks of support in the above-mentioned cities.

Note on transliteration

In relation to transliteration of local-language-terminology used in this report, it is important to understand that a national orthography for the Somali language was codified relatively late by adopting a Latin script (21 October 1972). Nevertheless, even today, Somali lacks a commonly applied and binding orthography.

In this report, Somali-language names for places, clans and personal names usually follow Somali orthography: 'long vowels are indicated by doubling them', as in *Darood* or *Abbaan*, 'the Latin 'c' stands for a sound close to the Arabic ع (ayn), while 'x' denotes the strongly aspirated ح (ha)'.¹⁰ However, given the fact that other sources adopt different conventions, the reader will sometimes find other forms of place, clan, and personal names in the text, including where direct citations are used or in references.

It is also important to note that Somalis, notably Somali men, are frequently better known by their nicknames than by their formal names. The same applies to public figures and politicians mentioned in the text, whose nickname is provided in quotation marks, such as in 'better known' or 'also known' as 'Qoor Qoor'.

Clan maps

For clan maps please refer to the EASO COI report [Somalia: Security Situation](#) from September 2021.¹¹

¹⁰ Hoehne M., *Between Somaliland and Puntland*, 2015, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹ EASO, *Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation*, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 17-19



Maps



Map 1. Map of Somalia¹²

¹² Map 1: UN, Somalia, Map No. 3690 Rev. 10, December 2011, [url](#)

1. Profiles

1.1. Recruitment and desertion/defection

Generally, men, women and children are frequently recruited by the local (not external) parties to the ongoing war in Somalia. Al-Shabaab and the Somali National Army (SNA) as main Somali opponents try to access, sometimes by force, recruits and those providing logistic support and other services (including sexual services).¹³ Over the last years, thousands of children (basically between 11 and 17 years old) have been recruited by all sides, but the majority of them were recruited by Al-Shabaab.¹⁴ For more details see the EUAA COI report on [Somalia: Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#) from February 2023.¹⁵

1.1.1. Recruitment of men, women, and children by Al-Shabaab

According to Zakia Hussen, former Deputy Police Commissioner General, who was interviewed for this report, Al-Shabaab recruitment works differently in different areas, depending on the level of control the group exercises in a place and what it needs at a given moment in time.¹⁶ The group recruits female and male persons, from majority and minority groups and it recruits fighters and suicide bombers, as well as informants and those offering logistic support or aiding otherwise.¹⁷ According to Prof. Roland Marchal, senior fellow at Sciences Po in Paris, it also recruits online, through propaganda videos, targeting audiences in Somalia but also in neighbouring countries from Ethiopia to Tanzania.¹⁸

In the past it was reported that Al-Shabaab recruited many children, sometimes from the age of nine onward, many of them by force. In early 2017, the UN Secretary-General ‘estimated that more than half of al-Shabaab’s fighters may be children’. A Somali taskforce recorded the recruitment of 4 213 children — almost all boys — into al-Shabaab between 1 April 2010, and 31 July 2016.¹⁹ Additionally it was reported that girls and women were forced to work as sex slaves for Al-Shabaab or marry Al-Shabaab fighters.²⁰ The UN panel of experts for Somalia found in 2024 that ‘Al-Shabaab remains the perpetrator with the highest recorded number of incidents of recruitment and use of children, abduction and forced marriage.’²¹ The practice of

¹³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p.19

¹⁴ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 42

¹⁵ EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025. Zakia Hussen is Former Deputy Police Commissioner General based in Mogadishu

¹⁷ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁸ Counter Extremism Project, Al-Shabaab, 2024, [url](#), p. 4; Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025. Roland Marchal is a Senior Fellow at the Centre de Recherches Internationales at Sciences Po, in Paris, since 1997, with a specialisation in Somali politics and conflict dynamics. He is also the co-founder of the research programme, the East Africa Observatory

¹⁹ Counter Extremism Project, Al-Shabaab, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

²⁰ Counter Extremism Project, Al-Shabaab, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

²¹ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 4



recruiting children from a young age (12 or even younger) is ongoing.²² There are also sources that emphasise that voluntary recruitment is more significant than forced recruitment in recent years. This concerns particularly areas which are long-term under Al-Shabaab control.²³ The German Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF, 2024) emphasised that ‘voluntary and forced recruitment often go hand in hand.’²⁴ In rural areas in southern Somalia, especially in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions, Middle and Lower Jubba, Bay and Bakool, where Al-Shabaab exercises control since 2007, people became accustomed to Al-Shabaab’s ideology; youngsters have been socialised into it.²⁵ Zakia Hussen stated that ‘recruitment in those areas is easy for the group.’ Young people from around 12 onward join the group, receive training and are used as fighters or suicide bombers from age 15 or 16.²⁶ In some cases, individuals who are coming from other areas but are sharing the groups ideological orientation, join voluntarily.²⁷ UNICEF members were interviewed by the BAMF during a fact-finding mission in December 2023. They mentioned that around 500 children were recruited by Al-Shabaab between January and September 2023.²⁸ The US Department of State (USDOS) reported in April 2024 that Al-Shabaab forcibly recruited children to participate directly in hostilities, including suicide attacks.²⁹ The Bertelsmann Foundation found in March 2024 that Al-Shabaab was coercing local communities and elders to hand over young recruits.³⁰ Recruits (forced or not) of the group are usually between the age of 11 and 25. Yet, two sources mention that even children aged nine or younger are recruited.³¹ Such young children are more likely to be targeted for recruitment into indoctrination camps to be later transferred to training camps as early teens.³²

Several factors are influencing recruitment by Al-Shabaab, which can be understood as a spectrum from voluntary membership to forced recruitment.³³ The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs found in June 2023 that ‘the distinction between “voluntary” and “forced” membership of al-Shabab was not obvious.’ Recruitment frequently results from a mixture of factors like economic and social discontent that can be fuelled and/or exploited by Al-Shabaab, religious indoctrination and/or zeal, grievances against the government, the international community or other clans, and fear of repercussions from Al-Shabaab.³⁴

One factor for joining Al-Shabaab is grievances. There are many Rahanweyn, Somali Bantu/Jareer and members of smaller minority groups from the Benadir coast (between

²² UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 42

²³ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

²⁴ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

²⁵ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

²⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

²⁷ Radio Dalsan, Renowned Somali Poet and Former University Lecturer Confirms Joining Al-Shabaab, 8 February 2024, [url](#)

²⁸ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

²⁹ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 - Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 16

³⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 19

³¹ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

³² Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

³³ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; see also Prah, P. K. W., From Somalia with Love: Unveiling Al-Shabaab’s Recruitment Strategies, Power Projection, and the Somali Government’s Countermeasures, 12 July 2023, [url](#), pp. 7-8

³⁴ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report on Somalia, June 2023, [url](#), p. 34



Mogadishu and Kismayo), in Al-Shabaab today.³⁵ Zakia Hussen gave the opinion that long-standing feelings of being marginalised facilitated their membership in Al-Shabaab. Rahanweyn are not a minority group but have long been treated as second-class citizens in Somalia. They have ‘suffered tremendously’ at the hands of Hawiye and Darood clan-militias in the 1990s and are still underprivileged compared to the dominant clans. Jareer and other minorities are discriminated until today (see chapter [1.4 Minorities](#)).³⁶ However, according to Somalia expert Markus Hoehne, Rahanweyn or Somali Bantu/Jareer are rarely to be found in leadership positions within Al-Shabaab but rather exclusively employed as foot soldiers, hinting at discrimination within the group.³⁷ A second factor is that in areas which are in the hands of Al-Shabaab for many years, the group controls the local society as a whole.³⁸ Paa Kwesi Wolseley Prah, lecturer at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, found recently that Al-Shabaab ‘has enforced its interpretation of Sharia law through the use of courts and other judicial bodies, and it has punished those who violate its rules with harsh penalties, including amputations, floggings, and executions. By enforcing its strict interpretation of Islamic law, Al-Shabaab has been able to present itself as a legitimate Islamic authority in the areas under its control.’³⁹ In these areas, joining Al-Shabaab is ‘normal’. Al-Shabaab can demand support from local families whose members often do not know any other authority than Al-Shabaab.⁴⁰ Former Deputy Police Commissioner General Zakia Hussen reported that, in some places, when the government forces were approaching, the male Al-Shabaab members retreated. Women and children were left behind. The latter were so indoctrinated that they refused to engage with soldiers or policemen. Only after a while, they realised that the government officials were not all ‘kufar’ (unbelievers), as Al-Shabaab officials had been telling the locals over years.⁴¹ A third recruitment factor is Al-Shabaab’s strategy to get involved as mediator in local conflicts between patrilineal descent groups. Once mediation succeeded, Al-Shabaab demands young people to join them.⁴² A fourth factor is (military) pressure and threats. This entails forced recruitment on the spot, also as a form of retaliation during operations against opponents.⁴³ In other cases, especially in Galgadud and parts of Mudug region, in the wake of the stalled military offensive of the government there, supported by local *Macawisley* militias, Al-Shabaab attacked and threatened locals and demanded their return to the group’s ‘overlordship’.⁴⁴ Fearing reprisals, many actually reverted back to Al-Shabaab in the course of 2023 and as ‘compensation’ offered fighters to join Al-Shabaab.⁴⁵

Further recruitment factors, complementing those mentioned above, include Al-Shabaab also offering payment and family support. Payment for rank and file in Al-Shabaab is 200-300

³⁵ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

³⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

³⁷ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025. Markus Hoehne is a lecturer in social anthropology at the University of Göttingen (Germany), specialized on Somalia, fluent in Somali language, and with many years of experience in conflict-research

³⁸ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

³⁹ Prah, P. K. W., *From Somalia with Love: Unveiling Al-Shabaab’s Recruitment Strategies, Power Projection, and the Somali Government’s Countermeasures*, 12 July 2023, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁴¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁴² Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025.

⁴³ UNHCR July 2024: Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) FLASH ALERT #14, [url](#), p. 1.

⁴⁴ Michael Jones, Christopher Hockey, Stig Jarle Hansen and Mohamed Gaas 19 June 2024: *Crunch Time in Somalia*. [url](#)

⁴⁵ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025



USD/month, which is similar to what low-rank SNA soldiers or policemen would get (including their food allowances).⁴⁶ Suicide bombers reportedly get offered larger amounts of money. Also in Kenya, e.g. among Somalis in Eastleigh, the Somali-dominated neighbourhood of Nairobi, Al-Shabaab recruits by using a mixture of financially attractive offers and religious indoctrination.⁴⁷ Often also relatives recruit other relatives.⁴⁸ Furthermore, social mobility (in the form of promotions) and the prospect to get an Al-Shabaab arranged marriage attract some people to the group. BAMF found in 2024 that '[t]he prospect of marriage in particular is a pull factor for women and men alike. Marriage can provide women with social advancement and security, while men find recognition in the group and hope to start a family through marriage.'⁴⁹ Foreign fighters are also attracted by the prospect of marrying Somali women.⁵⁰ Al-Shabaab recruitment also is influenced by current Somali and regional politics. Williams (2024) reported that recently, Al-Shabaab started a huge recruitment campaign 'drawing on Somali anger at the memorandum of understanding (MOU) concluded between Ethiopia and Somaliland on 1 January 2024.'⁵¹ Williams adds that while 'true strength [of Al-Shabaab] remains unknown, the militants have consistently replenished their losses through forcible recruitment and cutting deals with clans.'⁵²

Recruitment in Mogadishu became more complicated for Al-Shabaab, according to Police General Zakia Hussen. Previously, the group recruited in Koranic schools in the Somali capital. Yet, according to the source, over the last few years, many young people in Mogadishu have been more interested in money and worldly success than in joining the potentially deadly struggle of Al-Shabaab for ideological reasons.⁵³ In the capital city, Al-Shabaab focuses on recruiting persons with social influence, including university teachers, school teachers, elders and medical professionals.⁵⁴ Also IDPs residing in the outer districts of Mogadishu, where Al-Shabaab has a very substantial influence, are frequently recruited by Al-Shabaab. IDPs serve not so much as fighters or suicide bombers but as informants, spies, and/or persons who can offer hiding places for weapons, ammunition, or explosives. They may receive a moderate remuneration, but many also collaborate because they are scared.⁵⁵

Still according to Zakia Hussen, across south-central Somalia, elders or professionals are also targets of Al-Shabaab recruitment. These persons offer access to society and also have skills that are in demand, especially medical professionals. Al-Shabaab offers them considerable incentives to join clandestinely.⁵⁶ Prof. Roland Marchal mentioned that Al-Shabaab also recruits actively Ethiopians, Kenyans and Tanzanians holding grudges against the political system in their respective country of origin.⁵⁷ Diaspora Somalis are often viewed with suspicion by Al-Shabaab. The group is weary of being infiltrated by those who have

⁴⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁴⁷ Prah, P. K. W., From Somalia with Love: Unveiling Al-Shabaab's Recruitment Strategies, Power Projection, and the Somali Government's Countermeasures, 12 July 2023, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁴⁸ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025

⁴⁹ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁰ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁵¹ Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 36

⁵² Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 40

⁵³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁵⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁵⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁵⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁵⁷ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025



connections abroad and may work with foreign governments fighting terrorism in Somalia. Financial support from the diaspora, however, is welcome.⁵⁸

Information on the recruitment process and Al Shabaab training was scarce amongst the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this report. BAMF found in 2024 that ‘the training of minors includes one and a half years of religious training at a Quran school and two years of military training. The latter is to be carried out from the age of 14 to 15. Younger members would remain in the Quran school for longer.’⁵⁹ Orphans are of particular interest for Al-Shabaab, since they have few social ties and can thus be socialised into the group as loyal members.⁶⁰ Two sources reported that women are actively participating in Al-Shabaab. They are combatants, spies, recruiters, fundraisers, (future) wives, cooks, tailors, cleaners, religious preachers, nurses, they store weapons, hide assassins and/or weapons after attacks, and are helping with money laundering.⁶¹ Women are also ‘assisting in planning terror-related activities.’⁶² They also play a role for recruitment and ‘brainwashing’ of potential or new recruits.⁶³ Also the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia found in its 2024 report that ‘women [in Al-Shabaab] can become perpetrators of grave violations against children and conflict-related sexual violence when they use their social influence to exploit girls and boys to support the group or facilitate forced marriages.’⁶⁴ On rare occasions, female suicide bombers are used. They are typically conducting more devastating attacks given there is less suspicion by security forces against women entering government offices or public places.⁶⁵ Women in Al-Shabaab controlled areas also actively contribute to the group maintenance by giving birth to many children and raising them in accordance with Al-Shabaab ideology.⁶⁶

(a) Repercussions for refusing to be recruited

Information on repercussions for refusal to be recruited was scarce amongst the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this report. Older sources, from 2018, state that refusing to join Al-Shabaab or hand over recruits could result in attacks by the group on local communities.⁶⁷ Those rejecting Al-Shabaab had to flee the areas in which the group exercised control.⁶⁸ For more details, see chapter 2.2.2 of the EUAA COI report on [Somalia: Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#) (February 2023).⁶⁹

⁵⁸ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁵⁹ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6.

⁶⁰ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6.

⁶¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 2023, [url](#), p. 42

⁶² Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 2023, [url](#), p. 42

⁶³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025.

⁶⁴ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 41

⁶⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 2023, [url](#), p. 41

⁶⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁶⁷ HRW, Somalia: Al-Shabab Demanding Children, 14 January 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025

⁶⁹ EUAA, Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#)



(b) Repercussions for deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab

Khalil and Zeuthen found, based on a recent study, that not all members of Al Shabaab remain committed to the group's ideology and objectives. Yet, defection is potentially punishable by death. Khalil and Zeuthen added that many former Al Shabaab members waited months or even years for suitable opportunities to exit.⁷⁰ BAMF found during its recent fact finding mission that '[d]esertions occur rarely, but are generally possible, especially in the context of religious training. According to the same organisation, the monitoring of recruits is rather weak during the initial training period.'⁷¹ Former Deputy Police Commissioner General Zakia Hussen indicated that ordinary rank and file can defect. Yet, defection mostly concerns those who have been forcibly recruited in areas that are not under long-term Al-Shabaab control. She gave the view that those who grew up with Al-Shabaab rarely defect. If persons defect from areas under Al-Shabaab control, the group can use the access to their (extended) family to keep those who distanced themselves from the group in check. These persons are sometimes used as 'double agents' by Al-Shabaab. They defect, get potentially re-educated and integrated e.g. in the Somali police force and particularly in the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), and continue providing Al-Shabaab with information.⁷² Police General Zakia Hussen mentioned that the current defector programs of the Somali government are not well organised.⁷³ In some cases, Al-Shabaab defectors managed to exit through arrangements with the relevant security agencies, typically assisted by relatives including elders.⁷⁴ Individuals with little social relations outside Al-Shabaab and those from less powerful clans face challenges exiting through prearranged ties to the authorities. Also, the security after defection is not always guaranteed by the state authorities.⁷⁵

Prof. Roland Marchal indicated that people defecting from Al-Shabaab tend to go to an area where nobody knows them. Al-Shabaab has its clandestine information networks in many places. But defectors are also at risk of being ostracised by the local society in places where they seek to hide.⁷⁶ People are suspicious about ex-Al-Shabaab members. Moreover, NISA is interested in defectors and goes after them. This can create serious problems for defectors. Many defectors try to seek refuge outside of Somalia.⁷⁷ Social attitudes toward Al-Shabaab defectors vary across communities. In some cases, former Al-Shabaab members are socially isolated and face challenges regarding finding work and making a living. National defectors programmes offering basic education, vocational training, and other advantages to ex-Al-Shabaab members are sometimes perceived as rewarding violent insurgency. Communities that previously suffered severely from Al-Shabaab brutality are less likely to welcome

⁷⁰ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2023, [url](#); see also EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#), p. 30-31

⁷¹ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁷² Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁷³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁷⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025; see also EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#), p. 34-35

⁷⁷ Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025



defectors.⁷⁸ The UN Panel of Experts on Somalia found in 2024 that many women leaving Al-Shabaab 'are highly vulnerable to stigma and live in extreme poverty due to exclusion from communities and resources. [...] Many choose to live in isolation for fear of stigma.'⁷⁹ Rehabilitation centres for women formerly associated with Al-Shabaab have been closed.⁷⁹ Two sources reported to BAMF that deserters, notably high-ranking members of Al-Shabaab and important persons like elders or other community leaders would be traced and hunted by the group. Within this context 'deserters with relevant knowledge of the group's organisation or logistics are also systematically tracked' in case of desertion.⁸⁰ For more background see the EUAA COI report on [Somalia: Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#) (February 2023).⁸¹

Motivations to desert Al-Shabaab range from worries about personal safety to the wish to reunite with family members, to disillusionment about the brutal force applied by Al-Shabaab against local communities.⁸² Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen (2023), who studied reasons why women from Kenya would leave Al-Shabaab emphasised also that some women grew disappointed about the hard working conditions, racial hierarchisation (with women of Somali ethnicity being treated better than those of non-Somali ethnicity) and abuse by Al-Shabaab men.⁸³ In recent years, prospects of state amnesty also eased desertion to some degree. Particularly persons who have been forcibly recruited during Al-Shabaab campaigns in Hirshabelle and Galmudug, are likely to try to leave Al-Shabaab.⁸⁴ If a former Al-Shabaab member actually tries to profit from official rehabilitation programs, his/her defection is followed by screening which is considered as problematic in several regards. Screeners can be biased, e.g. toward their own relatives.⁸⁵ Former Deputy Police Commissioner General Zakia Hussen mentioned that sometimes persons who get through the screening only pretend to have left Al-Shabaab but try to infiltrate the security agencies by signing up especially for the SNA or NISA after having been vetted.⁸⁶ Khalil and Zeuthen (2023) found that the screening process is problematic due to the subjective interpretation of the screening criteria, inadequate intelligence, and the biases of screeners, who might treat relatives more favourably than others.⁸⁷ Khalil and Zeuthen (2023) reported that 'the National Defectors Programme cannot guarantee security for individuals who disengage, with al-Shabaab often continuing to threaten its former members long after their exit.'⁸⁸ For more information on the consequences for leaving Al-Shabaab as well as on formal and informal disengagement

⁷⁸ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 41

⁸⁰ Germany, BAMF, Country report 71 - Somalia: Fact Finding Mission, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁸¹ EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#)

⁸² Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁸³ Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 2023, [url](#), pp. 48-49

⁸⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁸⁵ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁸⁷ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Khalil, J., and Zeuthen, M., The 'Off-Ramp' From al-Shabaab: Disengagement During the Ongoing Offensive in Somalia, 7 March 2025, [url](#)



pathways, see the EUAA COI report on [Somalia: Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#) (February 2023).⁸⁹

1.1.2. Recruitment of men, women and children by other actors

The SNA has a considerable budget. Defence spending in Somalia in 2024 was close to 25 % of the overall federal budget of 1.1 billion USD.⁹⁰ This means that the SNA has a considerable potential for recruitment. According to Zakia Hussen, while exact numbers are difficult to get, it is likely that currently, the SNA consists of some 22 000 soldiers.⁹¹ Thus it is probably over twice the size Al-Shabaab at the moment.⁹² Over the last two years, the Federal Government of Somalia launched new recruitment drives, seeking new recruits to join the national armed forces. It is, however, unclear how many have really been recruited.⁹³ There are risks related to large numbers of recruits being integrated into the SNA within a short period of time. They concern their adequate training.⁹⁴ Recruitment by the SNA in recent years was also motivated by the fact that the military campaigns against Al-Shabaab in central Somalia from mid-2022 onward and recent fighting in Middle Shabelle, not far from Mogadishu, have produced considerable casualties.⁹⁵ The SNA typically recruits young Somalis (men, but also women) between 18 and 22 years. Applicants should have completed their secondary school education. Candidates must be physically and mentally fit.⁹⁶ In recent years, thousands of recruits were sent abroad, e.g. to Eritrea and Uganda, for military training.⁹⁷ The Somali government also recruits for Special Forces, including the US-trained Danab brigade that has attracted recruits from across the country.⁹⁸

Officially, recruitment into the Somali army and the other security forces in Somalia is voluntary. The government cannot legally recruit under aged persons, although with no formal system of birth certification it may be difficult to determine exact age.⁹⁹ Yet, according to UNOCHA, children ‘aged between 11 and 17 years were identified as being most at risk of forced recruitment. There are also reports of clan elders who ordered to recruit a certain number of children from their communities to fight alongside the Somalia National Army’.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in the context of the large-scale military campaign against Al-Shabaab in central Somalia starting in mid-2022, clan-based militias fought alongside the SNA, while relying on under-age persons.¹⁰¹ As indicated by the US Department of Labor, in the course of 2023, ‘despite a government order barring the recruitment of children into state armed groups,

⁸⁹ EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁰ Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 36

⁹¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025

⁹² Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 40

⁹³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025; Radio Dalsan 10 August 2024: Somali National Army Seeks New Recruits for Exclusive Overseas Training, [url](#); Mustaqbal Media 18 June 2024: Somalia's National Army Command Announces Recruitment Drive for New Officers, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 36.

⁹⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025

⁹⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025

⁹⁷ Radio Dalsan 10 August 2024: Somali National Army Seeks New Recruits for Exclusive Overseas Training, [url](#)

⁹⁸ Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 40

⁹⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁰⁰ UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023, 9 February 2023, [url](#), p. 33

¹⁰¹ UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023, 9 February 2023, [url](#), p. 86; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025





members of the federal armed forces, security services, regional forces, and police in Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland continued to recruit children into their ranks'.¹⁰² The United Nations reported that the SNA recruited some 121 children between 2019 and 2022.¹⁰³ There were also reports that, in 2021 and 2022, parents of new recruits complained that recruitment had happened under false pretences. 'Some of the parents stated that their sons had been told that they were being recruited for training in Qatar, but that they were then transported to Eritrea to join Eritrean troops in fighting in Tigray (Ethiopia)'.¹⁰⁴ It also happens that some young men did not disclose to their parents that they were joining the SNA. The recruits are also not always aware where they will be trained.¹⁰⁵ Generally, the forces are relatively attractive especially to Somali youth, since they provide young people with a regular salary, against the backdrop of widespread youth unemployment.¹⁰⁶

Recruitment mainly focuses on Mogadishu and surroundings. While calls for recruitment by the government are public and directed potentially, to all citizens of Somalia, the assessment and registration happens in Mogadishu. This is why mostly people from southern Somalia join the SNA. They hail from different patrilineal descent groups including Hawiye, Darood, Dir and others.¹⁰⁷ Yet, there are also recruitment strategies ongoing e.g. in northeast Somalia, in Puntland. The government in Garowe complained in March 2025 that the government in Mogadishu was 'covertly recruiting the youth from Puntland as soldiers who will be later deployed in the frontlines in order to fight against Al-Shabab militants'.¹⁰⁸ In early April 2025, in the wake of fighting between the SNA and Al-Shabaab around Bal'ad town some 40 kilometres north of Mogadishu, Baidoa Online reported about 'Forced Recruitment Amid Manpower Shortages'. An SNA senior military officer 'ordered families in the Middle Shabelle region to provide recruits for the fight against Al-Shabaab, warning of severe consequences for noncompliance'.¹⁰⁹

(a) Repercussions for refusing to be recruited

Information on the repercussions for refusal to be recruited to Somali state forces was scarce. According to Zakia Hussen, recruitment into the Somali security forces (SNA, also police and NISA) is largely voluntary. Only in exceptional cases, as documented above, some force is exercised. Thus, 'refusing recruitment is a very marginal problem' when it comes to SNA, Somali police or other official security forces in Somalia, at least in recent years.¹¹⁰ Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

¹⁰² US Department of Labor, Somalia, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 2023, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰³ Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 36.

¹⁰⁴ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report on Somalia, June 2023, [url](#), p. 31

¹⁰⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁰⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁰⁷ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁰⁸ Somaliland Standard, Puntland regional authority accuses Somali Federal Gov't of recruiting youth as soldiers, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Baidoa Online, [X], posted on: 2 April 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025





(b) Repercussions for desertion

According to Zakia Hussen, desertion from the SNA happens mainly in the face of potentially deadly military operations. In the offensive against Al-Shabaab in central Somalia that had started in mid-2022, which is still ongoing, both Al-Shabaab and SNA suffered considerable losses. The losses of respected SNA officers around Awsweyne (Galgadud region) in August 2023 had a negative impact on the moral of the soldiers. This increased the risk of desertion. However, desertion of ordinary soldiers does not lead to persecution by the army. In cases in which soldiers have deserted, they typically take their gun along. Their salaries are terminated, and the ex-soldiers then live among their extended family. Yet, officers refusing orders or leaving the battlefield are typically brought before military court. Note that due to the conditions of the lifting of the arms embargo in Somalia, all government owned weapons have been tagged with individualised ID number, thus should these guns be brought to the black market they can and will be traced.¹¹¹ Further and corroborating information on the repercussions for desertion could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

1.2. Women and girls

Gender equality¹¹² and women's empowerment were described as some of the most significant challenges Somalia faces.¹¹³ The country ranked third last in 2024 on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index,¹¹⁴ with women and IDPs being among the most vulnerable categories in Somalia.¹¹⁵ Somalia is one of the few countries that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as of March 2025,¹¹⁶ or the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.¹¹⁷ Women and girls in Somalia experience humanitarian 'crises' in different ways due to existing gender inequalities and norms, systemic disparities and power dynamics.¹¹⁸

As of 2023, Somalia's population was 18 358 615, out of which 9 160 786 were women.¹¹⁹ According to the 2020 Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS), 46.5 % of women had no education, 4.7 % completed primary school, 6.1 % secondary and 5 % had higher education.¹²⁰ Between 2021 and 2023, the gross enrolment rate of girls at primary education

¹¹¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹¹² UNDP, Somalia, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, n.d., [url](#); EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142

¹¹³ UNDP, Somalia, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴ UNDP, Advancing Rule of Law in Somalia, updated as of January 2025 [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁵ Federal Republic of Somalia, Somali National Development Plan 9-2020-2024, 5 January 2020, [url](#), p. 100

¹¹⁶ EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142; also see UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN Treaty Body Database, n.d., Ratification Status for Somalia, filtered by country, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 38

¹¹⁸ UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹⁹ World Bank Group, Population, total – Somalia, 2023, [url](#); World Bank Group, Population, female – Somalia, 2023, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), p. 24



was 83 %, 29 % at secondary level and 2.3 % at the tertiary level.¹²¹ As of February 2024, 19.6 % of seats in the parliament were held by women in Somalia.¹²²

1.2.1. Gender based violence (GBV), types, prevalence and situation of women in the Somali society, including forced and child marriage

(a) The legal framework

Somalia has a hybrid legal system, which includes formal, Sharia, and Xeer (clan) laws.¹²³ Institutions are described as ‘frail or non-existent’ in many parts of Somalia, resulting in sexual offences being mainly handled as per Xeer law, which provides that the crime is not attributed to the individual, but to their clan.¹²⁴ Xeer is described as the preferred system for dispute resolution, while state officials also perpetuate its use by referring cases back to clan elders, who still remain the most powerful upholding force behind justice and access to it.¹²⁵ For further information on the gendered impact of Xeer, see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021), notably chapter 2.3.2 Customary justice - Xeer and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR),¹²⁶ as well as chapter 2. Women and Girls of the [EUAA COI Report: Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#) (September 2021).¹²⁷

The Penal Code of Somalia identifies and penalises sexual offences in articles 398-407; however, the Penal code is described as outdated, criminalising a limited range of sexual acts and including contradictory and outdated definitions, without for example ‘adequate consideration of the principle of consent’.¹²⁸ Both Somaliland and Puntland apply the 1962 Somali Penal Code when it comes to criminal cases.¹²⁹

The Sexual Offences Bill was sanctioned by the Council of Ministers of Somalia in 2018 aiming to cover gaps and outdated aspects of the Penal Code; however, it remains pending approval of the lower house of the Parliament (the People’s House).¹³⁰ In 2020, the Sexual Intercourse and Related Crimes Bill (SIB) was introduced, possibly with the intention to supersede the Sexual Offences Bill, and it was heavily criticised by civil society and women’s rights

¹²¹ UNHRC, East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes (EHAGL) Region, Gender Equality, 2024 Annual Update, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹²² UN Women, Data, Somalia, n.d., [url](#)

¹²³ UN OHCHR, Tackling Sexual Violence in Somalia: Prevention and Protection, 7 May 2024, [url](#), p. 21; SIHA Network, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, August 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹²⁴ SIHA Network, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, August 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹²⁵ Somalia, MOIFAR, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Prevention and Response Action Plan, March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹²⁶ EASO, Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 30-32

¹²⁷ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 29-31

¹²⁸ SIHA Network, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, August 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹²⁹ UN OHCHR, Tackling Sexual Violence in Somalia: Prevention and Protection, 7 May 2024, [url](#), p. 21

¹³⁰ SIHA Network, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, August 2024, [url](#), p. 7; UN OHCHR, Tackling Sexual Violence in Somalia: Prevention and Protection, 7 May 2024, [url](#), p. 26



advocates.¹³¹ The UN Human Rights Committee in a May 2024 report expressed its concern that the bill on sexual intercourse and related crimes ‘does not provide for substantive protection to victims of sexual violence and allows for child marriage’.¹³²

On 28 December 2023, the Offences of Rape and Indecency Bill was passed by the Cabinet;¹³³ the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted the existence of articles in the bill not in line with international humanitarian standards, citing as an example the definition of rape which ‘must contain the element of consent as part of the crime, and the crimes of indecency must be clearly defined so that conduct that is prohibited and is punishable under the law is clear’.¹³⁴ Similarly the Independent Expert highlighted provisions in the Bill of concern to her, including the definition of coercion and of indecency.¹³⁵

In August 2020, Somaliland’s House of Representatives passed the Rape, Fornication and Other Related Offences Bill (Law No. 78/2020).¹³⁶ According to the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Action Plan by the Somali Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), ‘[t]he law does not provide any details on legal age of a minor in Somalia or sex consent’.¹³⁷ According to a joint statement by the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission and other human rights advocates, the bill does not ‘sufficiently protect survivors of rape and punish perpetrators’.¹³⁸ On 24 June 2024, Somaliland’s President issued a decree formalising the implementation of a resolution to prosecute rape cases through the formal court system instead of through the traditional system, with the formal courts being the only authorised institutions to deal with rape cases.¹³⁹ Further information on the implementation of this decree could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

¹³¹ SIHA Network, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, August 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹³² UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, 6 May 2024, [url](#), para. 17

¹³³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 73

¹³⁴ UNSOM, Statement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Catriona Laing to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia, 19 February 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 73

¹³⁶ SIHA Network, Joint Statement: the Sexual Offenses Bill must be urgently revived, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁷ Somalia, MOLSA, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Action Plan, December 2023, [url](#), p. 7

¹³⁸ SIHA Network, Joint Statement: the Sexual Offenses Bill must be urgently revived, 26 February 2021, [url](#); Republic of Somaliland, SLNHRC, Annual Report 2020, 31 December 2020, [url](#), p. 44

¹³⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 66



(b) Gender based violence (GBV)

Women in Somalia are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence,¹⁴⁰ domestic violence, FGM/C,¹⁴¹ conflict-related sexual violence¹⁴² - particularly rapes and gang rapes combined with homicide - as well as lack of accountability for perpetrators.¹⁴³ GBV was described as an ongoing 'highly prevalent and persistent phenomenon' for women in Somalia, with its most common forms including harmful traditional norms and practices linked to FGM/C, early and forced marriage, as well as physical and sexual violence, including Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).¹⁴⁴ Women and girls in Somalia were reported to be increasingly vulnerable to gender-based violence due to multiple displacements, difficult living conditions, and overcrowded IDP camps; the above being further impacted by unsafe travel to services, markets, and schools, decreasing family income and ongoing food insecurity, with women and girls continuing to be exposed to rape, intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual abuse, and exploitation.¹⁴⁵ The combination of limited access to and availability of services, as well as the stigmatisation and fear of reprisals from the perpetrator, family members and community members, that victims of GBV in Somalia were reported to face, significantly impacted their access to services. Recourse and access to justice were reportedly impacted by delays, with UNFPA adding that perpetrators 'are not often held accountable due to weak rule of law and discriminatory social and cultural norms'.¹⁴⁶

An ongoing pattern of attacks on social media towards female elected officials, including by former elected officials, was noted while patterns of 'gendered disinformation' and hate speech both in mainstream and social media were reported, with women with a presence in public and political life, including activists, leaders and journalists being targeted.¹⁴⁷

The UN Security Council stated that sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia was 'significantly underreported',¹⁴⁸ while the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia highlighted the possibility of underreporting of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, due to reasons including 'cultural taboos,

¹⁴⁰ EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 36; WHO, Public Health Situation Analysis: Greater Horn of Africa - 12 September 2024, 12 September 2024, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁴¹ EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142

¹⁴² This type of violence includes included rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys. Source: UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, 6 May 2024, [url](#), para. 17

¹⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 36

¹⁴⁴ African Development Bank Group and UN Women, Republic of Somalia – Country Gender Profile, November 2023, [url](#), p. 34

¹⁴⁵ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: January-July 2024, 2 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁶ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁷ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 61

¹⁴⁸ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 184



stigmatisation, fear of reprisals, insecurity, barriers to humanitarian access and inadequate care services',¹⁴⁹ as well as due to the difficulty in accessing areas and verifying incidents.¹⁵⁰

During 2023, incidences of GBV steadily increased in comparison to 2022.¹⁵¹ Between July-September 2023, 2 823 new GBV cases were reported in Somalia, including 714 incidents of sexual violence, with 62 % of the cases being physical assault and 17 % of them being rape.¹⁵² Between October-December 2023, 2 544 new GBV cases were recorded in Somalia, including 495 incidents of sexual violence.¹⁵³ In late 2023, following an El Niño phenomenon which resulted in very heavy floods after a period of extended drought, approximately 700 000 women and girls were impacted by lack of access to protective shelter and adequate specialised services for GBV.¹⁵⁴ In 2023, according to UN reporting, sexual violence was reportedly perpetrated against 197 girls, primarily by 'unidentified perpetrators', followed by Al-Shabaab members and government security forces.¹⁵⁵ In the first half of 2024, there were more than 500 reported cases of sexual violence against children with GBV being described by UNICEF as 'pervasive' and 70 % of GBV cases affecting individuals under 18 years, while there were 'increasing concerns' about sexual violence against boys.¹⁵⁶ In the period from January to June 2024, a decrease of reported rape cases was recorded compared to the same period in 2023.¹⁵⁷ Between July 2023 and September 2024, different incidents of conflict-related sexual violence were reported, against women and girls with the perpetrators including unknown armed actors,¹⁵⁸ state actors, and Al-Shabaab fighters.¹⁵⁹

(c) Early and forced marriage

UNICEF defines child marriage as a union, formal or informal, between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child.¹⁶⁰ The UN Human Rights Committee highlighted the high rates of early and forced marriage in Somalia, with some Somali girls marrying even before the age of 15.¹⁶¹ Child marriage is widespread in Somalia, being 'deeply rooted in cultural and social norms',¹⁶² with 45 % of women between 20 to 24 married before the age of 18,¹⁶³ and with 8 % of girls married before the age of 15.¹⁶⁴ In traditional pastoralist communities, early

¹⁴⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 37

¹⁵⁰ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 76

¹⁵¹ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵² UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: July – September 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵³ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: October – December 2023, 26 June 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵⁴ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: October – December 2023, 26 June 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁵ UN, General Assembly - Security Council, Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, A/78/842-S/2024/384, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 167

¹⁵⁶ UNICEF, Somalia: 2025 CP AoR HNRP Snapshot - March 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: January-July 2024, 2 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 37; UNSC, Situation in Somalia, 3 June 2024, S/2024/426, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁵⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 65; UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁶⁰ UNICEF, Child marriage, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶¹ UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, 6 May 2024, [url](#), para. 15

¹⁶² Federal Government of Somalia and UN Women, Beijing+30 National Review and Reporting, 2024, 31 August 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁶³ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁶⁴ Girls Not Brides, Somalia, n.d., [url](#)



marriage (below 18 years) was common, and particularly child marriage among girls, with girls often married by the age of 12 or 13, with marriage considered the ‘ultimate goal’ for a girl and key for her livelihood security.¹⁶⁵

Some illustrative examples include, in July 2024, an incident of conflict-related sexual violence was reported against seven girls who were going to be forcibly married to Al-Shabaab members. The girls aged between 14 and 17 years were trafficked from the Bay region and intercepted in Mogadishu in the process of being transported to Galgaduud region for forced marriages to Al-Shabaab members. The girls stood trial before the first instance military court in Mogadishu for alleged affiliation with Al-Shabaab, and were released and transferred to a rehabilitation centre the same day,¹⁶⁶ while between January to May 2024, another incident of conflict-related sexual violence was reported of a forced marriage of an underage girl by an Al-Shabaab member in Jubbaland state.¹⁶⁷

(d) GBV and situation of women under Al-Shabaab, including forced and child marriage

According to interviews conducted by the UN with female Al-Shabaab defectors, women under Al-Shabaab in general held support roles, such as *zakat* (religious tax) collectors, madrasa teachers and preachers, and security guards in prisons. In terms of support to Al-Shabaab’s operational activities, women were also serving as cooks and cleaners for Al-Shabaab fighters, storing weapons and acting as spies. The women highlighted ‘the dire economic and humanitarian situation,’ a general lack of health and education facilities in Al-Shabaab controlled areas, and the strict control on their life and behaviour. Despite the formal ban on women working, Orly Stern, a researcher and human rights lawyer with focus on ‘women in war’,¹⁶⁸ described in a 2021 report on the gendered economy of Al-Shabaab that women were at times ‘actively’ involved in Al-Shabaab’s financial and business interests. This included moving goods over the borders between Al-Shabaab and government-controlled territory, as they can cross the borders between the territories more easily than men.¹⁶⁹ In another report from 2019, Dr Stern highlighted that in the cases where women were actively participating in Al-Shabaab, meaning beyond their roles as wives, they were playing a range of roles and unlike men, most women would support Al-Shabaab from their homes – in cities, towns and villages, both in territory under Al-Shabaab control and in unoccupied territory.¹⁷⁰

According to another research, still by Orly Stern, on the wives of Al-Shabaab (2020), in general ‘the ways communities treat al-Shabaab wives depends largely on how those communities feel about al Shabaab’, with wives of Al-Shabaab members ‘enjoying better treatment – and even some status – in al-Shabaab territory’.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ African Development Bank Group and UN Women, Republic of Somalia – Country Gender Profile, November 2023, [url](#), p. 35

¹⁶⁶ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁶⁷ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁶⁸ Stern, O. M., Orly Maya Stern – About, n.a, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ Stern, O. M., Al-Shabaab’s Gendered Economy, Adam Smith International, 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 24

¹⁷⁰ Stern, O., M., The Invisible Women of Al-Shabaab, 2019, [url](#), p. 16

¹⁷¹ Stern, O. M., Married in the Shadows: The Wives of al-Shabaab, 2020, [url](#), p. 28



Al-Shabaab was described as remaining the perpetrator with the highest recorded number of incidents of forced marriage.¹⁷² According to the UN Security Council, Al-Shabaab ‘draws’ many women forcefully, using conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls in order to gain and maintain control of communities under its control. In addition, it reportedly uses abduction and forced marriage ‘as a form of compensation to its fighters and to forge ties with prominent clan leaders’.¹⁷³ Al-Shabaab was reported to continuing kidnapping women and girls, force families to surrender their daughters to marry, and to occupy hospitals and maternity wards.¹⁷⁴

(e) Situation of women who left Al-Shabaab and repercussions for leaving Al-Shabaab

Women regularly mentioned that a key factor for their defection was the protection of their children from recruitment, as well as the fact that their husbands had been killed in Al-Shabaab operations.¹⁷⁵

According to two experts on disengagement from Al-Shabaab and on former members interviewed by the EUAA in 2022, a woman’s capacity and options to leave Al-Shabaab is significantly impacted by which actor is in control of the area where she lives and whether it has been reclaimed by government forces or not.¹⁷⁶ According to findings¹⁷⁷ from interviews conducted with former female members who had disengaged from Al-Shabaab, the majority had become tired and frustrated with the roles they held within Al-Shabaab, and the reasons for disengaging ‘reflected their disillusionment, frustration and anger’.¹⁷⁸

According to an expert on disengagement from Al-Shabaab interviewed by the EUAA in 2022, the consequences associated with leaving Al-Shabaab (territory) depend on women’s role or situation within the group prior to her leaving. The expert added that women were exposed to retaliation and threatening from the group linked to the role/function they used to have within the group.¹⁷⁹ Most of the women who leave Al-Shabaab are described as ‘highly vulnerable to stigma’ and living in conditions of extreme poverty since they are excluded from communities and resources, while many choose to live in isolation fearing stigmatisation. The women who escape take their children and few possessions, while many have no skills or education, making them dependent to community support and aid.¹⁸⁰ According to Dr. Stern, as of 2020,

¹⁷² UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁷³ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 188

¹⁷⁴ UN Women, Speech: Seize the opportunity for decisive action in Somalia, 22 February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ UNSC, Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2022/754*, 10 October 2022, [url](#), para. 29 and 30

¹⁷⁶ EUAA, EUAA COI Report - Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁷⁷ Interviews and data were collected between 2017-2021. Source: Badurdeen, F. A., Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 22 June 2023, British Academy (the), [url](#), p. 40

¹⁷⁸ Badurdeen, F. A., Returning home: the reintegration dilemmas of female Al-Shabaab defectors in Kenya, 22 June 2023, British Academy (the), [url](#), pp. 48-49

¹⁷⁹ EUAA, EUAA COI Report - Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 45-46

¹⁸⁰ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 190



the ease of integration of women after they have left Al-Shabaab depends very much on the places women move to, and the level of family or clan connection/support they can rely upon,¹⁸¹ while in their new location women face multiple challenges, including poverty, stigma and mistrust from within the hosting community (including IDP camps) or the family circle, sexual exploitation, and fear of Al-Shabaab (also within IDP camps).¹⁸² There were also reports that the government was not allowing individuals that previously cooperated with Al-Shabab from returning to areas formerly under Al-Shabaab control.¹⁸³ On 8 August 2023, four women married to alleged Al-Shabaab members stood trial alongside their driver, accused of transporting material destined to make explosive devices. After they denied any knowledge of their husbands' affiliation and the transported materials, they were sentenced to two years' imprisonment each, and later released on parole.¹⁸⁴

The UN noted the closure of dedicated rehabilitation centres for women who used to be associated with Al-Shabaab, in a report covering the period from September 2023 to August 2024.¹⁸⁵ Additional information on the latest status of the rehabilitation centres for women could not be found. In 2020, two female rehabilitation centres were established in Baidoa and Kismayo for women who used to be associated with Al-Shabaab, as well as in Mogadishu which was ran by an NGO, however the latter reportedly closed after 2020 due to funding cuts.¹⁸⁶ As of April 2023, rehabilitation facilities were reported for both men and women in 'at least three different locations': Kismayo, Baidoa and Mogadishu.¹⁸⁷ As of January 2024, the UN Security Council reported that five rehabilitation centres in Mogadishu, Kismaayo and Baidoa and one multifunctional reception centre in Galmudug were operational, providing support to 215 female and 502 male beneficiaries.¹⁸⁸ For more information on women leaving Al-Shabaab and repercussions for doing so, see section 2.2 Women of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab](#)

1.2.2. FGM/C and repeated FGM/C

This section on FGM/C and repeated FGM/C complements and updates the [EUAA COI Query Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C](#) published on 21 April 2023, as well as the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published on September 2021.

¹⁸¹ Stern, O. M., *Married in the Shadows: The Wives of Al-Shabaab*, Adam Smith International, 2020, [url](#), pp. 32-37

¹⁸² Stern, O. M., *Married in the Shadows: The Wives of Al-Shabaab*, Adam Smith International, 2020, [url](#), pp. 38-39

¹⁸³ ODI Global, *Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, 1 August 2023, [url](#), p. 20

¹⁸⁴ UNSC, *Situation in Somalia*, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 56

¹⁸⁵ UNSC, *Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023)*, S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 190

¹⁸⁶ UN OHCHR, *Tackling Sexual Violence in Somalia: Prevention and Protection*, 7 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 17-18

¹⁸⁷ Zeuthen, M., *The National Programme for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants in Somalia, Challenges and Recommendations*, RUSI, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁸⁸ UNSC, *Situation in Somalia*, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 28



(a) FGM, forms, practices, performers and (extended) family's role

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is described as almost 'universal' in Somalia,¹⁸⁹ with the very high prevalence particularly in rural areas¹⁹⁰ indicating that it is a deeply rooted custom in Somali culture¹⁹¹ and in social norms¹⁹² while tradition, as well as 'beliefs and ideas of purity and beauty' are cited among the reasons of the perpetuation of FGM/C.¹⁹³ Many Somali children grow up in communities where FGM/C, alongside child marriage, sexual assault, domestic violence, and child labour are 'accepted or tolerated societal norms'¹⁹⁴ with some forms of GBV described as 'normative' in Somalia.¹⁹⁵ For the period from July 2023 to June 2024, the UN Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia highlighted a 'recurrence' of FGM/C practices.¹⁹⁶

Female circumcision is prohibited according to Article 15 of the Provisional Constitution of Somalia, which states 'Female circumcision is a cruel and degrading customary practice, and is tantamount to torture. The circumcision of girls is prohibited'.¹⁹⁷ However, there is no national legislation in Somalia expressly criminalising and punishing the practice of FGM/C.¹⁹⁸ In 2024, the state of Galmudug was the first state in Somalia to pass a bill outlawing all forms of FGM/C.¹⁹⁹ However, considering the below information on prevalence rate, a significant gap between the legal framework and practice is noted.

Prevalence

According to the latest available data²⁰⁰ from the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS), as of 2020, 99.2 % of women in Somalia had undergone FGM/C. Among women aged 15-19, 73.0 % had undergone FGM/C between the ages 5-9.²⁰¹ The 2025 report by Equality Now on FGM/C, citing new data (no further information is provided), stated that that FGM/C

¹⁸⁹ UNFPA, Somali survivors of female genital mutilation advocate to change minds – and lives, 26 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Federal Government of Somalia and UN Women, Beijing+30 National Review and Reporting, 2024, 31 August 2024, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁹¹ UNFPA, Somali survivors of female genital mutilation advocate to change minds – and lives, 26 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹² Federal Government of Somalia and UN Women, Beijing+30 National Review and Reporting, 2024, 31 August 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁹³ GIZ, Working for Sustainable Change Best Practices from the GIZ Regional Programme on the Prevention of FGM in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia, February 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁹⁴ UNICEF, Somalia: 2025 CP AoR HNRP Snapshot - March 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Federal Republic of Somalia, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Prevention and Response Action Plan, Revised Draft, July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁹⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 39

¹⁹⁷ Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹⁸ Orchid Project and Ifrah Foundation, Legislative and Policy Framework options for Somalia, December 2023, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁹⁹ UN, UNifeed, Somalia / Galmudug anti-FGM Law, 13 May 2024, [url](#); Global Observatory (the), Online Gender-Based Violence and a Path to Justice: Interview with Deqa Yasin, 8 July 2024, International Peace Institute (IPI), [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 39

²⁰⁰ As of March 2025, the latest available Somali Health and Demographic Survey was conducted in 2020, while the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) by UNICEF for Somalia were completed in 2006 and 2011, and as of March 2025 a new survey was in design level. Sources: Somalia, SNBS, Surveys, n.d., [url](#); UNICEF, MICS, Surveys, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰¹ Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 220-221



prevalence rates in Somalia had remained the same.²⁰² For more details on the prevalence of FGM/C in Somalia, see [EUAA COI Query Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C](#).

Forms

The Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) described three forms of FGM/C: the 'Sunni', the 'Intermediate' and the 'Pharaonic' FGM/C.²⁰³ According to a joint Grassroots, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA reports, Type II is also called Sunna and has two main subtypes in Somalia called Sunna Kabiir and Sunna Saqiir.²⁰⁴ The most prevalent form of FGM/C is WHO Type III, known in Somalia as the 'Pharaonic' type.²⁰⁵ Sunni is the Somali word used for the Sunnah type, while Fircooni for the Pharaonic.²⁰⁶ For further information on the different forms as well as for details on their prevalence in Somalia, see Figure 1, [EUAA COI Query Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C](#).

Societal attitudes and practices

With regards to societal attitudes on FGM/C, 72 % of women aged between 15-49 believed that FGM/C was a religious requirement according to the 2020 SHDS,²⁰⁷ with 76.4 % believing that the practice must continue.²⁰⁸ FGM/C was reported to often be associated with purity, pre-marital virginity, and reduced 'promiscuity', as a result creating societal pressures to families to have their daughter undergo FGM/C in order to have increased chances of finding a husband.²⁰⁹ The main drivers for the continuation of FGM/C included tradition, religion, social acceptance, financial motives as well as a belief that FGM/C was 'for the protection of girls'.²¹⁰ According to a 2019 report by the Swedish Migration Agency, the prevalence of FGM/C within Al-Shabaab controlled areas was reaching 98 %.²¹¹ However, obtaining credible data from Al-Shabaab controlled territory is challenging and that there is 'conflicting information on FGM in al-Shabaab controlled areas as well as their stance on the issue'.²¹²

Based on survey findings by the Dear Daughter Campaign,²¹³ some respondents were in favour of completely ending FGM/C, however, many supported a shift to Sunna (Type II) type, which is considered less severe and that it has less complications than the Pharaonic form,

²⁰² Equality Now, The Time is Now: End Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, An Urgent Need for Global Response 2025, February 2025, [url](#), p. 31

²⁰³ Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), p. 212

²⁰⁴ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), p. 4

²⁰⁵ African Development Bank Group and UN Women, Republic of Somalia – Country Gender Profile, November 2023, [url](#), p. 35

²⁰⁶ Grassroots Research et al., Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Kismayo, Jubaland, April 2022, [url](#), p. 6

²⁰⁷ Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), p. 219

²⁰⁸ Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), p. 223

²⁰⁹ Grassroots Research et al., Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 1, 3

²¹⁰ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Kismayo, Jubaland, April 2022, [url](#), p. 21

²¹¹ Sweden, LIFOS, Lifos report: Somalia - Female genital mutilation (version 1.1), 27 August 2019, [url](#), p. 22

²¹² Denmark, DIS, Somalia, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), February 2021, [url](#), p. 17

²¹³ The Campaign was developed jointly by UNFPA and the Ifrah Foundation 'with the aim that no one ever experiences female genital mutilation'. Source: UNFPA and Ifrah Foundation, About us, n.d., [url](#)

with most of the participants confirming that the Pharaonic form ‘is becoming less popular’ and is being replaced by the Sunna form.²¹⁴ Based on the findings, it was noted that there was significant community pressure to continue FGM/C, describing it as a significant component of ‘Somali religious, cultural, and social practice’. However, the ideas around FGM/C seemed to be shifting, with younger generation of men seeming to prefer marrying women who had undergone the Sunna type or no FGM procedure at all, unlike older men who tended to prefer women who had undergone the Pharaonic type of FGM/C.²¹⁵

Performers and family’s role

FGM/C is performed by traditional cutters, for whom FGM/C constitutes a form of income, as well as by midwives at home or by a doctor at a hospital,²¹⁶ while, according to the FGM/C Initiative, it is performed mainly by traditional practitioners, but with medicalised FGM/C increasing.²¹⁷ Medicalisation of FGM/C refers to FGM/C conducted by medical practitioners, such as doctors, nurses, midwives and other health professionals either in a health-care facility or at the house of the woman who undergoes FGM/C.²¹⁸

Mothers were described as traditionally being in control of the decision whether their daughters would undergo FGM/C, occasionally with grandmothers also being involved, while fathers played a secondary role.²¹⁹

(b) Repeated FGM, forms and practices

Types and forms of repeated FGM/C include de-infibulation (or defibulation), which is a procedure performed on women who previously underwent infibulation (type III FGM/C) to re-open their vaginal introitus.²²⁰ According to a 2015 study on FGM/C in Somalia, in Somaliland, Puntland and Central Somalia, both de-infibulation and re-infibulation to women and girls were reported to occur.²²¹ Reinfibulation is the ‘resuturing after delivery or gynaecological procedures of the incised scar tissue resulting from infibulation’.²²² According to Landinfo, as of 2022, there were no studies on the extent of reinfibulation in Somalia after giving birth and

²¹⁴ Grassroots Research et al., Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁵ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁶ Grassroots Research et al., Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Kismayo, Jubaland, April 2022, [url](#), pp. 1, 6

²¹⁷ FGM/C Research Initiative (the), Somalia, n.d., [url](#); Mehriban, N. et al, Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of female health care service providers on female genital mutilation in Somalia: A cross-sectional study, 21 September 2023, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁸ Mehriban, N. et al, Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of female health care service providers on female genital mutilation in Somalia: A cross-sectional study, 21 September 2023, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁹ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), p. 10

²²⁰ Ibe, C. and Johnson-Agbakwu, C., Female Genital Cutting: Addressing the Issue of Culture and Ethics, August 2011, pp. 29-30; Okusanya, B., O., et al, Deinfibulation for preventing or treating complications in women living with type III female genital mutilation: A systematic review and meta-analysis, February 2017, [url](#)

²²¹ Crawford, S. and Ali, S., Situational Analysis of FGM/C stakeholders and interventions in Somalia, HEART, 2015, [url](#), pp. 75-76

²²² Serour, G., I., The issue of reinfibulation, May 2010, [url](#)

divorce,²²³ while according to a study on Somali migrants in Norway, there was no clear evidence to indicate that reinfibulation is common in post-delivery procedures in Somalia.²²⁴ For more information on the different forms and practices of repeated FGM/C, see [EUAA COI Query Somalia, Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C](#). Information on repeated FGM/C within the reference period of this report could not be found.

(c) Repercussions for refusing to undergo the practice

Stigma and social isolation for themselves, their daughters and their families occurred for women who were not circumcised by FGM/C.²²⁵ A 2023 study co-authored by UNFPA on FGM in Somalia quoted one male interviewee who stated that “when women who are not cut marry into a family with a cutting tradition, they’re treated quite horribly, they are made fun of. People won’t eat the food they prepare. They are called dirty and spiritually impure...”.²²⁶ If women were found not to be ‘*bikro*’ - a concept meaning that ‘there is honour in husbands having difficulty penetrating their wives on their wedding night as it indicates purity or virginity’ – the husband could perceive that he married an ‘impure’ woman, which would bring shame to her family and her family could also be discriminated against.²²⁷

Girls who have not undergone FGM/C reportedly face bullying and harassment at school, by friends as well as community members, with girls occasionally requesting themselves to undergo FGM/C for reasons of social inclusion, while mothers who have not had their daughters undergo FGM/C were perceived to fail as mothers.²²⁸ Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

1.2.3. The situation of single and minority women, notably in IDP camps, or women and girls with lack of network support

More than 3.8 million people are displaced in Somalia, of whom 80 % are women and children,²²⁹ who, according to the UN, are at risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and eviction.²³⁰ Minority women were described as among the ‘most marginalized people in

²²³ Norway, Landinfo, Somalia, Female Genital Mutilation, 14 September 2022, [url](#), p. 12

²²⁴ Johansen, R., E., B., Virility, pleasure and female genital mutilation/cutting. A qualitative study of perceptions and experiences of medicalized defibulation among Somali and Sudanese migrants in Norway, 10 February 2017, [url](#)

²²⁵ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 11, 12; UNICEF, Case study on ending female genital mutilation in the Federal Republic of Somalia, 15 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9; Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Fgm: Case Study to inform the Dear Daughter Campaign, Garowe, Puntland, 2021, 14 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

²²⁶ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Mogadishu, Banadir, January 2023, [url](#), p. 11

²²⁷ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM: Impact Assessment of the Dear Daughter Campaign on FGM Prevalence, Kismayo, Jubaland, April 2022, [url](#), pp. 21, 3, 32

²²⁸ Grassroots Research, Ifrah Foundation and UNFPA, Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Fgm: Case Study to inform the Dear Daughter Campaign, Garowe, Puntland, 2021, 14 April 2022, [url](#), p. 18

²²⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 38

²³⁰ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 39



Somalia²³¹ and as ‘particularly vulnerable’ to violence and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence both from within their communities and by armed forces, militias and members of majority clans.²³² For more information on minorities in Somalia, see also [1.4 Minorities](#).

In IDP camps, poor infrastructure, limited water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and overall insecurity resulted in sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls by individuals in positions of control,²³³ with UNFPA noting that women and girls living in IDP camps were exposed to ‘heightened risks of GBV’.²³⁴ In 2023, the majority of cases of conflict-related sexual violence verified by UNSOM were against displaced women and girls.²³⁵ Among the women living in IDP camps in Mogadishu, based on a study and interviews conducted between September and November 2023, many women ‘expressed living with a preoccupying fear of sexual violence’ at work, while others noted incidents of harassment and violence they had experienced at work or on the way there.²³⁶

Canada’s IRB, citing UNICEF’s Chief of Child Protection in Somalia, reported in 2019 that family ties in Somalia were strong and that women who have lost husbands or fathers were taken in by their community who would act as a safety net; however, this only applied for the women who “‘have broken no customary laws or norms’”. Women who broke social norms or customs or who were victims of rape or sexual violence were ‘left “at the whim” of society without effective policing, justice or welfare systems’, possibly being ostracised if they were from a minority clan in the area, divorced, or victims of rape.²³⁷ Single women in Somalia were described as ‘remain[ing] vulnerable’, particularly those living in IDP camps or at informal IDP sites, while being more in danger of experiencing sexual violence,²³⁸ while displaced women and girls in Baidoa, Qansax Dheere and Dinsor ‘raised concerns of men intruding in the evening with the intent to raping women, particularly targeting new arrivals and women without male protection, whose men travels to rural villages for farming’.²³⁹

²³¹ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: January – March 2023, 1 May 2023, [url](#), p. 2

²³² UNOCHA, Somalia 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), 30 January 2024, [url](#), p. 15

²³³ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNFPA, Overview of Gender-Based Violence situation in Somalia, Advocacy Brief, 2022, [url](#), p. 3

²³⁴ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: July – September 2024, 25 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

²³⁵ UNSC, Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/698, 4 April 2024, [url](#), para. 56

²³⁶ Crawford, N. et al, The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 2024, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) and ODI Global, [url](#), p. 24

²³⁷ Canada, IRB, Somalia: Situation of women without a support network in Mogadishu, including access to employment and housing; treatment by society and authorities; support services available to female-headed households (2017-March 2019), 25 March 2019, [url](#)

²³⁸ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report on Somalia, June 2023, [url](#), p. 53

²³⁹ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 4



1.3. Individuals contravening Sharia (and customary) laws/tenets

For further background information, this chapter should be read in conjunction with relevant sections of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021), notably chapter 2.3. Access to justice through formal and informal systems,²⁴⁰ and the same chapter on Individuals contravening religious (and customary) laws/tenets in the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#) (September 2021).²⁴¹

1.3.1. Individuals contravening Sharia law in Al-Shabaab controlled areas

Following Hanbali precepts, Al-Shabaab imposes a strict version of Sharia.²⁴² The group imposes a system of ‘law and order’ centered on the ‘harsh’ interpretation of Islamic law and the *hudūd* punishments.²⁴³ These are mandated by Sharia in relation to crimes committed ‘against the rights of God’, such as illicit sexual relations (*zina*), theft and highway robbery, alcohol consumption, and apostasy.²⁴⁴ Other offences, such as drug usage and dealing, pornography, speeding, espionage are also sanctioned, leading to, among others, arrest and detention, as well as often exposing civilians to torture and beatings.²⁴⁵

In general, to enact its ‘strict moral codes of behavior’ Al-Shabab relies on the *jaish al-hisba*, an armed force it uses as both police and morality enforcement force.²⁴⁶ Along with supervising the public morale, Hisbah enforces the many religious-moral decrees issued by Al-Shabaab.²⁴⁷ Hisbah officers, who wear their own types of uniform, can either punish minor offences on the spot, often whipping the perpetrator, or bring more serious offenders to the court for further trial.²⁴⁸ Moreover, Al-Shabaab imposes its interpretation of Islam and full adherence to its precepts to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.²⁴⁹

Against this backdrop, women are required to be fully veiled,²⁵⁰ while television, cinema, music, internet,²⁵¹ watching sports, smoking, selling khat, the shaving of beards and other

²⁴⁰ EASO, Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), sections: 2.3 Access to justice through formal and informal systems; 4.4. Access to justice under Al-Shabaab, vv sections on Access to justice at Federal Member State level

²⁴¹ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 46-56

²⁴² Expanding Access to Justice Program, The Shari’ah in Somalia, March 2020, [url](#), pp. 13-14

²⁴³ Anzalone C., A Retrospective and Future Look at al-Shabab’s Governance, in Jihadist Governance and Statecraft 2024, [url](#), pp. 25,

²⁴⁴ Expanding Access to Justice Program, The Shari’ah in Somalia, March 2020, [url](#), p. 46

²⁴⁵ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 75-80

²⁴⁶ Anzalone C., A Retrospective and Future Look at al-Shabab’s Governance, in Jihadist Governance and Statecraft 2024, [url](#), pp. 26

²⁴⁷ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), p. 85

²⁴⁸ Skjelderup, M., Jihadi governance and traditional authority structures: al-Shabaab and Clan Elders in Southern Somalia, 2008-2012, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 1178

²⁴⁹ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 10

²⁵⁰ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 10

²⁵¹ See also Organised Crime Index, Somalia 2023 – Cyber crime, 2024, [url](#)



behaviour considered ‘un-Islamic’ are prohibited.²⁵² People caught while engaging in any of these activities, such as ‘smoking, having illicit content on cell phones, listening to music, watching or playing soccer, wearing a brassiere, or not wearing a hijab’ are detained under ‘inhumane conditions.’²⁵³ Listening to international media outlets in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab is also prohibited.²⁵⁴

According to various sources interviewed by the EUAA, people are not allowed to have and use smartphones, which prevents many of the above-mentioned activities from taking place altogether.²⁵⁵ According to a Somali judge based in the South-West State, people caught with smartphones are detained while their devices are destroyed.²⁵⁶

In general, there are nuances in the interpretation and the implementation of some of these rules, while at times the group has reportedly adopted a pragmatic middle-ground approach between nominal prohibition and de facto tolerance.²⁵⁷ As noted by Salim Said Salim, a Somali legal expert interviewed for this report, Al-Shabaab also relies on uncodified Sharia-based sources, which often leads to inconsistencies in its interpretation and implementation.²⁵⁸

For further background information on the legal framework, the societal attitudes, and the sanctioning of immoral behaviour in Al-Shabaab controlled areas see the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Actors](#), published in July 2021,²⁵⁹ and the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.²⁶⁰

Apostasy, blasphemy, and converts

Al-Shabaab embrace *takfirism* and declare Muslim adversaries, including the Somali government, to be apostates. Based on *takfirism* one is either a true believer or an apostate who is excommunicated from the religion. Al-Shabaab use this stance to provide the justification for killing other Muslims, including ‘Sufis, civilians, and Somali government officials’.²⁶¹ According to a Somali legal expert interviewed in April for this report, and who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons, the militant group refers to members and

²⁵² USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 10; see also Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 84-85

²⁵³ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 15

²⁵⁴ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 21

²⁵⁵ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025. The Somali local judge is a legal expert and practitioner in criminal law in Somalia; International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. The international humanitarian expert based in Somaliland has decades-long experience in Somalia and in the humanitarian sector in general; Somali sociological and religious analyst, Mogadishu resident, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. The Somali sociological and religious analyst is a scholar of Somali society

²⁵⁶ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

²⁵⁷ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025. Salim Said Salim is a Somali legal expert and the executive director of SIDRA (Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis). Salim is based in Garowe, Puntland; Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025; see also Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 95-96

²⁵⁸ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

²⁵⁹ EASO, Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), sections: 2.3.3 Sharia Law; 4.4. Access to justice under Al-Shabaab

²⁶⁰ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 46-56

²⁶¹ Bacon T., Inside the minds of Somalia’s ascendant insurgents, March 2022, [url](#), p. 38 and footnote n. 164; see also Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025



collaborators of the Somali government as *maamulka ridada*, which means the ‘government of apostasy’. Al-Shabaab’s understanding and interpretation of apostasy is wide and arbitrary.²⁶²

According to Humanists International, the global representative body of the humanist movement,²⁶³ in areas controlled by the group, people of non-Muslim faiths and converts from Islam routinely face execution.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, ‘Al-Shabaab threaten[s] to execute anyone suspected of converting to Christianity and consider[s] such converts as high-value targets’, according to Open Doors, an international Christian advocacy organisation,²⁶⁵ and other humanitarian groups.²⁶⁶

Blasphemy is also sanctioned with death, as documented in the case of Hassan Tohow Fidow, an 83 year old man who was executed by a firing squad in El Buur in 2021.²⁶⁷ Further recent examples of the sanctioning of blasphemy by the group could not be found within the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

Al-Shabaab is against the practice of Sufism, the formerly prevalent approach to Islam in Somalia,²⁶⁸ and imposes a religious conduct that is aligned with its Salafi interpretation of Islam.²⁶⁹ Information on the current treatment of Sufis in Al-Shabaab controlled areas is scarce,²⁷⁰ however, according to two interviewed sources for this report, they do not feel safe in such areas and cannot freely practice their faith.²⁷¹ In the past, Al-Shabaab has destroyed Sufi shrines, killed Sufi clerics, and militarily clashed with the Sufi militia Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa.²⁷² More recently, on 7 June 2024, about 30 Sufi scholars belonging to the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa group were abducted in the Laantaburo area, near Afgooye (Lower Shabelle), where they had gathered from across the country to perform their religious ceremonies.²⁷³

Stealing and thefts

Al-Shabaab cracks down on ‘banditry, armed robbery, theft’, which are collectively classified under the *hudūd* category of *hiraba* and “‘spreading corruption in the land”/ *mufsid fil-ard*’.²⁷⁴ Within this context, during the reference period of this report, ACLED kept track of the following reported incidents involving the sanctioning of such ‘crimes’:

²⁶² Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

²⁶³ Humanists International, About Humanists International, n.a., [url](#)

²⁶⁴ Humanists International, The freedom of thought report 2024, [url](#), p. 15

²⁶⁵ Open Doors International, Somalia: Full Country Dossier, January 2024, [url](#), p. 18

²⁶⁶ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁷ HRC, Written statement submitted by Jubilee Campaign, A/HRC/54/NGO/256, 20 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 3-4

²⁶⁸ EASO, Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 33-35

²⁶⁹ Bacon T., Inside the minds of Somalia’s ascendant insurgents, March 2022, [url](#), p. 38

²⁷⁰ IRB, Somalia: Situation of practitioners of Sufism, 27 March 2018, [url](#)

²⁷¹ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025; Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

²⁷² Bacon T., Inside the minds of Somalia’s ascendant insurgents, March 2022, [url](#), p. 38

²⁷³ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025; Halqabsi News, Rescue Efforts Underway for 30 Abducted Ahlu-Sunna Scholars, 9 June 2024, [url](#); Halqabsi News, Al-Shabaab Kidnaps Ahlu-Sunna Scholars in Lower Shabelle, 7 June 2024, [url](#); see also EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44841

²⁷⁴ Anzalone C., A Retrospective and Future Look at al-Shabab’s Governance, in Jihadist Governance and Statecraft 2024, [url](#), p. 26



- on 25 June 2024, in Saakow (Middle Juba), Al-Shabaab attacked two civilians accused of stealing (and committing adultery);²⁷⁵
- on 17 January 2025, in a public square in Qunyo Barrow village near Jilib (Middle Juba), Al-Shabaab amputated the right hand of a civilian accused of several shop thefts.²⁷⁶

Adultery and sexual misconduct

Sexual intercourse is only permitted within a marriage. In all other cases the *hadd* penalty prescribes, according to classical *fiqh* doctrines, 100 lashes for non-married individuals and death by stoning for married individuals, but it may only be applied under special circumstances.²⁷⁷ Against this backdrop, during the reference period of this report, ACLED kept track of following reported incidents involving Al-Shabaab's sanctioning of adultery and sexual misconduct through corporal punishments as well as execution in one case:

- public flogging with 100 lashes: on 12 May 2023, a man in Ceel Buur (Galgaduud), who was then exiled for one year;²⁷⁸ on 12 November 2023, a man in Jamaame (Lower Juba), who was then exiled out of the town;²⁷⁹ on 21 January 2025, a young boy in Qunyo Barrow village near Jilib (Middle Juba);²⁸⁰
- attacking and injuring: on 30 July 2024, a young girl in Saakow (Middle Juba);²⁸¹ on 19 December 2024, a civilian in a public square in Qunyo Barrow village near Jilib (Middle Juba);²⁸² on 24 January 2025, two civilians at a public square in Jamaame (Lower Juba);²⁸³
- executing: on 17 March 2025, two civilians in a public square in Buqda Caqable village near Bulo Burto (Hiraan), after accusing them of committing sexual offences in Belet Weyne.²⁸⁴

Khat and tobacco

The leaves of the khat plant (or *Catha Edulis*), an evergreen shrub, are chewed for their stimulatory effect by many Somalis.²⁸⁵ Known in Somalia as *Qaad* or *Jaad*, khat's licit or illicit status in Islamic jurisprudence has been highly contested.²⁸⁶ However, based on more recent information gathered through interviews, khat can neither be brought nor traded nor chewed in areas controlled by the group.²⁸⁷ Khat is viewed as *haram* - forbidden - and traders caught

²⁷⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44989

²⁷⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47747

²⁷⁷ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), p. 85

²⁷⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM40247

²⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42802

²⁸⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47792

²⁸¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45309

²⁸² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47545

²⁸³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47847

²⁸⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49479

²⁸⁵ Douglas H., Hersi A., Khat and Islamic Legal Perspectives: Issues for Consideration, 2010, [url](#), p. 95

²⁸⁶ Abdullahi A. M., The Islamic Movement in Somalia (1950 – 2000), May 2011, [url](#), p. 74 and footnote n. 98

²⁸⁷ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025; Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025; Somali development scholar based in Puntland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. The Somali development scholar based in Puntland is a seasoned researcher and observer of Somali issues across cycles and regions; International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025



smuggling or selling khat face serious consequences.²⁸⁸ According to another interviewed source, in several reported incidents Al-Shabaab confiscated smuggled khat from locals and burned it, while it was less clear how the group punished smugglers in the areas under their control.²⁸⁹

Within this context, based on ACLED data, during the reference period, Al-Shabaab abducted civilians transporting and trading in *mira*/khat in various locations across Somalia, often taking them to Jilib,²⁹⁰ such as in Jamaame (Lower Juba) on 28 September 2024,²⁹¹ and 15 November 2024.²⁹² For more information on Al-Shabaab targeting of khat dealers in areas outside Al-Shabaab's direct control please see section [1.3.2 Individuals contravening religious \(and customary\) tenets elsewhere in Somalia](#).

In the past, the groups' approach to khat has not always been the same. In 2006, the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia, immediately after gaining control of most of the southern part of the country, prohibited its consumption.²⁹³ Later, according to Skjelderup (2011), Al-Shabaab leadership has remained divided on the issue for years, while de facto adopting a pragmatic and half-hearted ban in the areas they controlled, as a way to maximise benefits and limit unpopular measures. Reportedly khat traders were allowed to sell khat at dedicated marketplaces outside towns, while khat chewers were allowed to consume khat in private houses or dedicated chewing zones,²⁹⁴ depending on the Al-Shabaab area and the decree or *fatwa* in force locally.²⁹⁵ According to the same source, the chewing of khat was conceived as an ordinary crime (*ta'zīr*) when done not in line with Al-Shabaab's regulations.²⁹⁶

Regarding tobacco, according to oral sources, smoking is currently prohibited, at least in public.²⁹⁷ Previously, in Al-Shabaab controlled areas, there were reportedly designated zones for smoking tobacco, while smoking of hashish was always conceived as *hadd* crime.²⁹⁸ Basically, the smoking of tobacco was conceived as an ordinary crime (*ta'zīr*) when done not in line with al-Shabaab's regulations.²⁹⁹ Further information could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

²⁸⁸ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

²⁸⁹ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

²⁹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter 'khat' or 'mira', and manual filtering

²⁹¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46634

²⁹² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47135

²⁹³ Douglas H., Hersi A., Khat and Islamic Legal Perspectives: Issues for Consideration, 2010, [url](#), p. 108

²⁹⁴ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 95-96

²⁹⁵ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 93-94

²⁹⁶ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), p. 72

²⁹⁷ Somali development scholar based in Puntland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025; International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025

²⁹⁸ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), pp. 93-96

²⁹⁹ Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), p. 72



Foreign influence

Under Salafism's worldview, it is crucial to keep Islam cleansed of un-Islamic influences, and 'impure' acts that can legitimise the exercise of *hisba*. Hisba is the term for the religious duty of "commanding right and forbidding wrong". Salafists, who are however a diverse group with many neither embracing nor accepting political violence,³⁰⁰ tend to strictly adhere to the rules of their moral code of what is considered *halal* (allowed) or *haram* (forbidden). This moral code regulates behaviour, actions, social relations, and personal appearance, including dress code.³⁰¹

Within this context, in Al-Shabaab controlled areas, and probably because perceived as innovations (*Bi'da*), men are not allowed to have a fluffy haircut, wear trousers, have moustache or be clean shaved, while women cannot wear a bra because perceived as a Western creation. *Bi'da*, innovations, are automatically forbidden because they are not grounded in the sacred texts, the Qu'rān and the *Haḍīth*.³⁰² People travelling to Al-Shabaab controlled areas are supposed to abide to these rules, including leaving their smart phone behind and having their hair neatly cut.³⁰³ Additional and more recent information could not be found within the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

1.3.2. Individuals contravening religious (and customary) tenets elsewhere in Somalia

For background information on the legal framework, the societal attitudes, and the sanctioning of religious laws - including for apostasy, blasphemy, or immoral behaviour - elsewhere in Somalia, see relevant sections in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021),³⁰⁴ and the same chapter on Individuals contravening religious (and customary) laws/tenets elsewhere in Somalia, in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#) (September 2021).³⁰⁵ This section should be read in conjunction with them.

Salafism is widespread in Somalia today.³⁰⁶ Not all Salafis are political extremists, and many would not support political violence as embraced by Al-Shabaab.³⁰⁷

Contravening Sharia laws in areas beyond Al-Shabaab territorial control laws lead to various consequences and is sanctioned with different penalties depending on the violations and on the relevant institution sanctioning them.³⁰⁸ Moreover, Al-Shabaab moral policing extends well beyond the areas they firmly control and reaches contested areas, as well as areas under

³⁰⁰ Hoehne, M. V., Input received during the peer-review process, 23 April 2025

³⁰¹ Esholdt H. F., and Necef M. U., Moral Policing of Gender Norms: Honor-Based Violence as a Mobilizing Factor Towards Militant Islamism, June 2024, [url](#), p. 3

³⁰² Skjelderup, M., Punishment on Stage - Application of Islamic Criminal Law by Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, 2011, [url](#), p. 72

³⁰³ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³⁰⁴ EASO, Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), sections: 2.3 Access to justice through formal and informal systems; 4.4. Access to justice under Al-Shabaab, vv sections on Access to justice at Federal Member State level

³⁰⁵ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 52-56

³⁰⁶ Expanding Access to Justice Program, The Shari'ah in Somalia, March 2020, [url](#), p. 14

³⁰⁷ Hoehne, M. V., Input received during the peer-review process, 23 April 2025

³⁰⁸ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025



government control. In practice, Al-Shabaab remains aware and monitors the local civilian population also in areas and towns from which it has lost control.³⁰⁹

In Somalia, corporal punishment is not foreseen by the Somalia Criminal Code, and only considered a recognised form of punishment under Islamic Law and by the Sharia courts.³¹⁰ In Somaliland, corporal punishment is unlawful under article 24 of the Constitution 2001 and article 2 of the Juvenile Justice Law 2007.³¹¹

Under Sharia law, corporal punishment is lawful as a sentence for crime, except possibly in Somaliland.³¹² Islamic law permits corporal punishment, such as stoning, amputation or flogging.³¹³ However, according to a local legal expert interviewed by the EUAA, corporal punishments for crimes such as adultery, alcohol consumption, or theft, although prescribed under Sharia law, ‘are rarely prescribed and enforced’ in Sharia ‘courts’ or on occasion of *Sheikhs, Ulama* or *Qadi* arbitrations. Due to strict evidentiary requirements and the presumption of innocence typical of Islamic jurisprudence, the application of such penalties is ‘quite rare in practice’.³¹⁴

Apostasy, blasphemy and converts

Blasphemy and defamation of Islam are criminalised by law,³¹⁵ including at Art. 313-315 of the Penal Code.³¹⁶ Punishments include fines and imprisonment up to two years,³¹⁷ de facto not more than four according to a local source.³¹⁸

Somalia de facto maintains the death penalty for apostasy.³¹⁹ Even though this concept is not mentioned in the Criminal Code,³²⁰ it is foreseen by the Sharia law.³²¹ However, according to a Somali legal expert, apostasy has not been the subject of specific accusations or landmark cases recently.³²²

Conversion from Islam to another religion is not explicitly outlawed,³²³ but it is prohibited as per the country’s interpretation of the Sharia, it is sanctioned with imprisonment up to two years,³²⁴ and it is socially unacceptable. Strong societal pressure compels people to fully

³⁰⁹ ODI, *Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, August 2023, [url](#), pp. 13-15, 20-21; see also EASO, *Somalia: Targeted Profiles*, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 52

³¹⁰ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³¹¹ End Corporal Punishment, *Corporal punishment of children in Somalia*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 5

³¹² End Corporal Punishment, *Corporal punishment of children in Somalia*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 5

³¹³ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³¹⁴ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

³¹⁵ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia*, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 22; USDOS, *Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report*, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

³¹⁶ Somalia, *Somali Penal Code*, 1962, [url](#)

³¹⁷ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia*, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 22; USDOS, *Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report*, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

³¹⁸ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³¹⁹ OHCHR, *The death penalty for apostasy and blasphemy – The Jubilee Campaign*, 2022, [url](#), p. 2

³²⁰ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³²¹ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³²² Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

³²³ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³²⁴ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025



adherence to Sunni Islamic traditions.³²⁵ In Somaliland, the constitution explicitly prohibits Muslims from converting.³²⁶ A similar provision is to be found in the constitution of Puntland.³²⁷ At the same time, federal and FMS governments maintain bans on the propagation of religions other than Islam.³²⁸

Those suspected of conversion reportedly face imprisonment, as well as harassment and intimidation – including death threats – by members of their community.³²⁹ Open worship or religious gatherings can result in violent reprisals, forced divorces, or even execution by extremist groups.³³⁰ Members of the small Christian community in the country, accounting for about 1 000, or ‘hundreds’, according to similar estimates,³³¹ as well as members of other non-Islamic religious groups – including Shia Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and those not affiliated with any religion - refrain from practicing their religious beliefs in public.³³²

In Somaliland, in October 2022, Hoodo Abdi Abdillahi received a seven-year prison sentence on blasphemy charges related to her alleged conversion from Islam to Christianity. Her sentence was shortened to five years in May 2023.³³³ Still in Somaliland, in 2022, the Supreme Court sentenced a local female resident to 5 years of prison for, among others, apostasy, blasphemy, and spreading of Christianity. In August 2023, the Court conditionally released her after she declared ‘a return to Islam’. However, she was subject to reimprisonment should she be ‘found practicing Christianity or communicating with Christians’.³³⁴ Other cases of physical assaults and beatings, imprisonment and persecution, trial, death and violence threats failing to ‘return to Islam’, were documented in Somaliland in the period 2019-2021.³³⁵

In South-Central Somalia, various instances of social sanctioning against converts were reported during the reference period. On 5 May 2024, Mohammad Abdul, who had converted to Christianity on 20 March, survived a knife attack by his relatives on the outskirts of Kismayo. His wife and 5 children were taken away by his relatives and brought back to ‘their people’.³³⁶ After having recovered his family and having relocated in a different location in Lower Juba, Abdul was physically assaulted by his relatives again in July 2024, and again in October 2024, while accusing him of leading Christian prayer meetings behind closed doors.³³⁷ On 20 January 2025, in Lower Juba, a Christian convert from Islam belonging to a secret fellowship

³²⁵ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-4, 11-12

³²⁶ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-4, 11-12

³²⁷ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 53

³²⁸ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 7

³²⁹ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 11-12; see also ICR Canada, Persecuted Christians in Somalia: A Growing Crisis, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

³³⁰ ICR Canada, Persecuted Christians in Somalia: A Growing Crisis, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

³³¹ Open Doors International, Somalia Background Information, September 2024, [url](#), p. 6

³³² USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 2, 12

³³³ HRC, Written statement * submitted by Jubilee Campaign, A/HRC/54/NGO/256, 20 August 2023, [url](#), p. 2;

USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 22

³³⁴ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 7

³³⁵ HRC, Written statement submitted by Jubilee Campaign, A/HRC/54/NGO/256, 20 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 2-3

³³⁶ The Christian Post, Christian convert in Somalia attacked by knife-wielding Muslim relatives, loses family, 29 May 2024, [url](#)

³³⁷ The Christian Post, Christian convert in Somalia suffers 3rd brutal attack by Muslim relatives for praying to Jesus, 22 October 2024, [url](#)



was physically assaulted and struck with a heavy metal object by his wife for worshipping the Christian faith at their home together with other people.³³⁸

Stealing and thefts

Theft and other crimes against property are regulated by the Penal Code at art. 480-495, which foresee different punishments, depending on the gravity of the offence, with fines and imprisonment up to 10 years, such as in the case of robbery or extortion.³³⁹ As mentioned above, while the Sharia law prescribes corporal punishments in case of theft – unless justified by a situation of need/hunger – the de facto enforcement of these provisions is quite complicated in practice,³⁴⁰ and rarely escalated to court – either state or Sharia – level.³⁴¹ In most parts of Somalia, ‘minor’ crimes like theft or stealing are taken care of by family elders. In everyday practice, neither Sharia nor statutory law are regularly appealed, except for family issues, where Sharia is used, or for cases of rape and other grave crimes where statutory law is used, at least in cities.³⁴²

In relation to Al-Shabaab’s capacity to sanction certain offenses outside their control area,³⁴³ in the reference period following case was also recorded:

- on 29 May 2024, suspected Al-Shabaab abducted a civilian accused of cattle rustling at the animal market in Beerhani village near Kismaayo (Lower Juba), while taking him to Jilib district.³⁴⁴

Adultery and sexual misconduct

Adultery is regulated by the Penal Code, at art. 426, within the wider context of ‘Crimes against the Family’.³⁴⁵ The punishment for adultery is imprisonment up to two years.³⁴⁶ Other types of crimes relevant in this context that are regulated in the code include: ‘Crimes against Morals and Decency’, which deal with acts such as ‘carnal violence’, ‘obscene acts’, ‘prostitution’, ‘homosexuality’, supply and consumption of alcohol, and ‘Crimes against the Health of the Human Race’, such as abortion.³⁴⁷ For more information on the treatment of homosexuality and LGBTIQ+ individuals see section [1.8](#).

According to Said Salim Said, ‘de facto, however, adultery and sexual misconduct cases rarely, if ever, reach the state courts system or the Sharia courts, with public reports about such

³³⁸ Christian Daily International, Christian in Somalia loses voice in attack by wife, 3 February 2025, [url](#); ICR Canada, Persecuted Christians in Somalia: A Growing Crisis, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

³³⁹ Somalia, Somali Penal Code, 1962, [url](#); Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³⁴⁰ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

³⁴¹ Somali development scholar based in Puntland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025; Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

³⁴² Hoehne, M. V., Input received during the peer-review process, 23 April 2025

³⁴³ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³⁴⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44771

³⁴⁵ Somalia, Somali Penal Code, 1962, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³⁴⁷ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025



cases basically not existent. When this exceptionally happen though, adjudication is preferably referred to elders or back to family members for a consensual solution.³⁴⁸

In relation to Al-Shabaab capacity to sanction certain offences outside their control area,³⁴⁹ based on ACLED data, in the reference period, Al-Shabaab sanctioned adultery and sexual misconduct on following reported occasions:

- by attacking and injuring: on 17 December 2024, a civilian near Qoryooley (Lower Shabelle);³⁵⁰ on 18 January 2025, two civilians in a public square in Buulo-Madiina village near Afgooye (Lower Shabelle);³⁵¹
- by torturing and injuring: on 21 January 2025, a young boy was tortured and publicly lashed 100 times in a public square in Kuunyo Barrow village near Wanla Weyn (Lower Juba).³⁵²

Khat or *mira* users and dealers

While khat's licit or illicit status is highly contested, most Salafi scholars in Somalia consider khat use to be *haram*.³⁵³ However, according to local sources interviewed by the EUAA, khat is not forbidden by the state law, and even the government profits substantially from taxing its trade.³⁵⁴

This notwithstanding, khat sellers and dealers are often targeted by Al-Shabaab – outside the areas they directly control. Based on ACLED data, during the reference period, the following illustrative events have taken place in Somalia in areas beyond Al-Shabaab's direct control:³⁵⁵

- Al-Shabaab ambushed and killed civilians on motorbikes or other type of vehicles, often transporting or distributing *mira*/khat in various locations across Somalia, including in: Dinsoor (Bay) on 10 September 2024;³⁵⁶ Shalambood (Marka, Lower Shabelle) on 23 September 2024;³⁵⁷ Buulo Cadey in Dinsoor (Bay) on 1 January 2024;³⁵⁸ at Qoryoley Bridge in Qoryooley (Lower Shabelle) on 17 March 2025;³⁵⁹ Bula Tubanay within Afmadow town (Lower Juba), on 10 February 2025;³⁶⁰
- Al-Shabaab targeted *mira*/khat markets (or distribution points) causing an undetermined number of fatalities and casualties in: Xaawo-Cabdi village near Afgooye (Lower Shabelle) on 27 September 2024,³⁶¹ and on 17 August 2024,³⁶² in Yeed (Bakool) on 15 January

³⁴⁸ Salim Said Salim, Email exchange, 7 April 2025

³⁴⁹ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025

³⁵⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47529

³⁵¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47764

³⁵² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47793

³⁵³ Douglas H., Hersi A., Khat and Islamic Legal Perspectives: Issues for Consideration, 2010, [url](#), pp. 100-108

³⁵⁴ Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview and email exchange, 2, 7 April 2025; Salim Said Salim, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

³⁵⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter 'khat' or 'mira', and manual filtering

³⁵⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45673

³⁵⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46561

³⁵⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43228

³⁵⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49477

³⁶⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48941

³⁶¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46627

³⁶² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45449



2024;³⁶³ in Hudur (Bakool) on 9 September 2024;³⁶⁴ in Afgooye (Lower Shabelle) on 2 December 2024;³⁶⁵ and 25 January 2025;³⁶⁶ in Luuq (Gedo), on 7 February 2025;³⁶⁷ in Mogadishu, Darussalam, on 17 February 2025;³⁶⁸

- Al-Shabaab abducted civilians, often taking them to Jilib, who were transporting and dealing with *mira/khat* in various locations across Somalia, including in: Afmadow (Lower Juba) on 26 January 2024, when they abducted an unknown number of civilians;³⁶⁹ in and around Kismayo (Lower Juba) on 9 August 2024,³⁷⁰ 20 September 2024,³⁷¹ and 28 December 2024 when they also tortured the victim;³⁷² in Buurdhuubo near Garbahaarey (Gedo) on 25 September 2024.³⁷³

1.4. Minorities

Minority groups in Somalia were subject to structural marginalisation and social discrimination, including racism and slavery from the 19th century onward.³⁷⁴ They were deprived of access to economic or political resources.³⁷⁵ Discrimination continued throughout the 20th century, with exceptions in the 1970s and 1980s under the government of Mohamed Siyad Barre.³⁷⁶ It directly led into the widespread exploitation and abuse of minority group members by armed militias belonging to majority clans in the early 1990s.³⁷⁷ Regarding this time, the Bertelsmann Foundation found: 'Entire population groups (e.g., the Jareer and Somali Bantu, and Benadiri minority groups along the southern Somali coast) have been forcibly displaced from their homes and land, subjected to forced and bonded labour, and many killed.'³⁷⁸ This situation has gradually changed and since the early 2000s, members of minority groups are not systematically persecuted any more by clan militias.³⁷⁹ Still, they are being subjected to various forms of severe discrimination and the dominance of majority groups until the present (early 2025).³⁸⁰ For more background information see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.³⁸¹

Group-belonging is important in Somalia. Against the backdrop of decades of state failure and civil war, primary solidarity lies with patrilineal relatives. For protection or gaining access to

³⁶³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43440

³⁶⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45659

³⁶⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47300

³⁶⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47849

³⁶⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48822

³⁶⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48994

³⁶⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43502

³⁷⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43389

³⁷¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46517

³⁷² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47622

³⁷³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46573

³⁷⁴ Besteman, C., *Unraveling Somalia: Race, violence and the history of slavery*, 1999, pp. 49-54

³⁷⁵ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 10

³⁷⁶ Hill, M., *No redress: Somalia's forgotten minorities*, 23 November 2010, [url](#), p. 10

³⁷⁷ Cassanelli, L., *Victims and vulnerable groups in southern Somalia*, 1995, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia*, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 23.

³⁷⁹ Hoehne, M. V., *Continuities and changes regarding minorities in Somalia*, 2015, pp. 792-807

³⁸⁰ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11; Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia*, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 23

³⁸¹ EASO, *Somalia: Targeted Profiles*, September 2021, [url](#), section 4



resources or the job market, most Somalis rely on support by their clan or lineage.³⁸² Lineage and clan elders mediate conflicts and distribute compensations or mobilise for defence.³⁸³ The power of the Somali government in Mogadishu is so limited that in most parts of Somalia people have to rely on self-help to defend themselves and their property. Self-help is organised primarily among close patrilineal relatives.³⁸⁴ Strong groups and those featuring 'long' genealogies (Somali: *laan dheere*), which automatically translates into many living members today, and thus man-power, are privileged.³⁸⁵ If a group additionally has access to weapons it can dominate others. Groups whose members do not have such an elaborate genealogical tree, are (putatively) smaller in numbers and have no or not much access to weapons, are underprivileged.³⁸⁶ It is worth here to note that the whole discourse about minorities in Somalia also has a political dimension. The term 'minority' (in Somali: *dadka laga tirade badan yahay*, which literally means 'people who are small in numbers') is used by dominant groups to justify their privileges.³⁸⁷ This translates in factual power differences, including the very limited (if at all) representation of those categorised as minorities in the government (at federal level and at member state level).³⁸⁸ Even where members of minority groups hold some positions in regional or federal government structures in Somalia, they hardly can speak about abuses their people suffer at the hands of majority group members.³⁸⁹ Most minority group members cannot expect effective protection from official side including from the judiciary.³⁹⁰

The US Department of State found in 2024 that 'Minority groups, often lacking armed militias, were disproportionately subjected to killings, torture, rape, kidnapping for ransom, and looting of land and property with impunity by faction militias and majority clan members, often with the acquiescence of federal and local authorities.' It added that minority communities frequently lived in deep poverty and 'suffered from numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion.'³⁹¹ It is believed that resentment over abuses made minority clans more vulnerable to recruitment by al-Shabaab (see also section on [1.1 Recruitment and desertion/defection](#)).³⁹²

Generally, members of minority groups are excluded from the political and economic sphere and there are reports of issues such as including dispossession, bonded labour and killing by other Somalis.³⁹³ They face numerous problems, including 'high levels of poverty,

³⁸² Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025. Fayza is a Somali civil society practitioner partly based in Somalia and partly abroad. She runs an NGO addressing societal issues across Somalia

³⁸³ Abdirahman Said Bile, *Beyond the Accord: The effectiveness of local peace structures in managing inter-clan conflicts in Puntland State*, 2024, [url](#), pp. 7-8

³⁸⁴ ACCORD, *Somalia: Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrerinnen; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure* [Seminar with experts Markus Hoehne and Jutta Bakonyi], 31 May 2021, [url](#), pp. 31-32

³⁸⁵ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; SOMRAF, *Report on Human Rights Violations Against the Somali Marginalized Minority Groups*, 2010, [url](#), p. 2

³⁸⁶ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

³⁸⁷ Shamso Sheegow 2025, *Dadka laga tirada badan yahay* [People who are fewer in number], 2025, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia*, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 11

³⁸⁹ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Email exchange, 17 April 2025. Kemal Dahir Ashour is an intellectual and long-term minority rights expert with focus on the Gabooye minority group. He frequently appears in Somali-language media as an analyst on Gabooye issues. He is currently based in Sweden.

³⁹⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia*, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 7

³⁹¹ USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 — Somalia*, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 42

³⁹² USDOS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 — Somalia*, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 42

³⁹³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia*, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 23



unemployment, and food insecurity'. It is hard for them to access land and secure property rights. This worsens their economic vulnerabilities.³⁹⁴ Stigmatisation results in limited school enrollment of minority group children (between 25 and 50%) and a relatively low literacy rate (between 35 and 60%).³⁹⁵ Health care for minority group members is limited due to insufficient services and cultural biases.³⁹⁶ Access to justice is problematic for minorities. Moreover, 'many minorities live in informal settlements or IDP camps, where they face forced evictions, lack of tenure security, and unequal access to humanitarian aid.'³⁹⁷ Members of these groups are under-represented in government. There, members of the four major clan families - Dir, Darood, Hawiye and Rahanweyn - receive an equal number of seats,³⁹⁸ while all minorities groups together get only half of the seats of each major clan group, under the so-called 4.5 formula,³⁹⁹ with minorities being '0.5'.⁴⁰⁰ According to Hoehne, even when minority group members have a seat in the Parliament or in the cabinet, their power and weight remains very limited.⁴⁰¹ Minority group belonging intersects with other forms of discrimination and risk across Somalia. Women and girls belonging to minority groups are at a comparatively higher risk of sexual abuse and violence.⁴⁰² Group belonging in combination with gender-based discrimination also influences access to education. Girls in communities like, e.g. Bantu (Jareer), Gaboye, and Eyle typically are hindered in their education not only by group-based discrimination but also by early and/or forced marriage preferentially practiced in those groups.⁴⁰³

Somali society is stratified mainly along lines of descent/group belonging and gender. With regard to minorities, there are 'caste' groups or occupational minorities (e.g. those belonging to the Gaboye-spectrum), ethnic minorities originating from outside of Somalia and keeping some cultural difference (e.g. Somali Bantu/Jareer) and other minority groups such as the original inhabitants of Mogadishu (who go back to intermarriages between local women and Arabic, Persian or European travellers) and others. Regarding more background on the notion of 'minority', see section 4 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.⁴⁰⁴

1.4.1. Low Status Occupational Minorities

Members of the low status occupational groups are collectively referred to as Gaboye. This is an umbrella-term for smaller minority groups dispersed across the Somali Peninsula (from eastern Ethiopia to northern, central and southern Somalia to northern Kenya). Groups belonging to the Gaboye collective are: Madhiban, Muse Deriye, Tumul, Yibir/Anas, Hawle, Wardheere, Yahar, Galgale, Asowe, and Hawrarsame.⁴⁰⁵ In the literature, there is

³⁹⁴ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁹⁵ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 18

³⁹⁶ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁹⁷ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁹⁸ Jama, A., The 4.5 Formula, 7 March 2028, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁰⁰ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁰¹ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; Kemal Dahir Ashour, Email exchange, 17 April 2025

⁴⁰² USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 34; Minority Rights Group, Looma Ooyaan – No one cries for them: the situation facing Somalia's minority women, 2015, [url](#), pp. 21-23

⁴⁰³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁴⁰⁴ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), section 4

⁴⁰⁵ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025



disagreement, however, about which groups belong under this umbrella. Vitturini, who has done research in north-western Somalia (Somaliland) insists that only Madhiban and Muse Deriye are Gaboye. He does not count Yibir, Tumul and others as Gaboye.⁴⁰⁶ Bahja-Ekman, who wrote her PhD at the University College London on Gaboye, counts also Yibir and Tumul as Gaboye.⁴⁰⁷ Yet, Kemal Dahir Ashour, an intellectual and long-term minority rights expert insists that across Somalia, many more groups belong to this collective. Their defining characteristic is that they were traditionally craftsmen or hunters.⁴⁰⁸ In southern Somalia, Gaboye are also involved in farming.⁴⁰⁹ It is also possible that some Gaboye groups were among those pre-Islamic and pre-ethnic Somali groups that inhabited the Horn of Africa before nomadic groups belonging to the (proto) Somali stratum settled there and were then subjugated by the latter.⁴¹⁰

Muse Deriye, Hawle and Wardheere mostly reside in eastern Ethiopia (and many fled to Somalia after the Ogaden war 1977-78). Tumul, Madhiban, Yibir live throughout Somalia.⁴¹¹ Members of these groups are discriminated by other Somalis. Their access to education and the job market is limited.⁴¹² Members of Somali majority groups usually do not intermarry with them.⁴¹³ This leads to seclusion of Gaboye. Some also speak their own dialect, that, however, is linguistically a version of Af-Mahaa, the standard Somali.⁴¹⁴ Gaboye have problems with access to health care and educations, especially in rural settings.⁴¹⁵ While it is difficult to know exact numbers, due to the absence of detailed demographic studies (and are national census data in Somalia since 1975)⁴¹⁶, the Minority Empowerment and Development Agency (MEDA) recently found that 'Gaboye people number approximately 100,000 to 200,000, spread across various regions of Somalia, including urban centers and rural areas of South Central Somalia.'⁴¹⁷ Here one has to note that numbers in the context of Somalia, where no general survey has been conducted since the mid-1980s and where never clan-identity was taken into account in demographic studies have to be taken with caution.⁴¹⁸

Madhiban. Madhiban were previously known as Midgan. The latter is a derogative term. It is used as curse-word in Somali.⁴¹⁹ Madhiban are traditionally barbers, tanners/leather workers including shoemakers, artisans and service providers.⁴²⁰ Particularly women of Madhiban also

⁴⁰⁶ Vitturini, E., *The Gaboye of Somaliland: transformations and historical continuities of the labour exploitation and marginalisation of hereditary groups of occupational specialists*, 2020, p. 474

⁴⁰⁷ Ekman, A. B., *A Critical Theory Approach to Inequality in Somali Society: Rethinking Class and Identity for the Gaboye Collective in Somaliland*, 2021, [url](#), p. 169

⁴⁰⁸ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴⁰⁹ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴¹⁰ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025; Lewis, I. M., *Saints and Somalis - Popular Islam in a Clan-Based Society*, p. 94

⁴¹¹ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴¹² MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 19-22

⁴¹³ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴¹⁴ Mukhtar, Mohamed H., *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*, 2003, p. 135; Kirk, J.W.C., *A Grammar of the Somali Language: With Examples in Prose and Verse, and an Account of the Yibir and Midgan Dialects*, 1905, pp. 184-190; Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴¹⁵ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴¹⁶ Harun Maruf, *Somalia Launches First Census in Nearly 50 Years*, 2 May 2023, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴¹⁸ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴¹⁹ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴²⁰ MEDA, *Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia*, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8 and 14; Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025





engage in traditional medicine and traditional practices (such as FGM) and spiritual services. The latter carries considerable stigma in the increasingly rigid Sunni Islamic Somali society.⁴²¹

Muse Deriye. They reside mostly in north-western Somalia (Somaliland) and in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. They traditionally work as barbers; women can also work as traditional healers and sometimes also perform FGM.

Tumal. Tumal reside across Somalia. Traditionally they worked as blacksmiths. More recently they often worked as mechanics in garages. Yet, the most lucrative of their businesses are often taken over by members of majority clans.⁴²²

Yibir. Yibir are known for their work as traditional healers and spiritual mediums, sometimes also considered ‘sorcerers’.⁴²³ They are a very small community living predominantly in rural areas across Somalia.⁴²⁴

Hawle. Hawle live mainly in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Only very few live in Somalia.⁴²⁵

Wardheere. Wardheere live mostly in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Only very few live in Somalia.⁴²⁶

Yahar. Yahar live mostly in south-central Somalia, in the regions of Galgudud, Hiran and Middle Shabelle.⁴²⁷

Galgale. Galgale live mainly in north-eastern Somalia (Puntland) and in the south.⁴²⁸

Asowe. Asowe live mostly in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Only very few live in Somalia.⁴²⁹

Hawrasame. Hawrasame live in the Somali region of Ethiopia, in north-eastern Somalia (Puntland) and in the south.⁴³⁰

1.4.2. Ethnic minorities

(a) Bantu/Jareer

Bantu/Jareer, sometimes also called ‘Jareerweyne’ or ‘Gosha’, live mainly in southern Somalia, along the Jubba river. They also have a presence in Bay region. They are partly descendants of slaves imported from the area of today’s Tanzania to southern Somalia in the 19th century.

⁴²¹ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 15; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴²² Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴²³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 9 and 15; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴²⁴ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁴²⁵ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴²⁶ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴²⁷ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴²⁸ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴²⁹ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴³⁰ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025





Many Somali-Bantu still speak their original (Bantu-)languages or a version of them.⁴³¹ There are Ki-Zigula speakers and Af/Ki-Mushunguli speakers in Jilib and Jamame districts of Lower Juba, but also in Mogadishu, Kismayu, and Baidoa, because of migration to these urban areas.⁴³² Lamberti, a linguist known for his extensive research on Somali dialects, found that Mushungul-speakers resided mainly in and around Jamame in Lower Jubba. Af-Mushunguli is a Bantu language. Many Af-Mushunguli speakers also speak Af-Maay, which is a particular dialect of Somali typically not understood by Af-Mahaa speakers.⁴³³ Jareer residing in Bay region also speak Af-Maay.⁴³⁴ They are also known for specific cultural practices like music, dance, and agriculture festivals.⁴³⁵

MEDA estimated that Bantu/Jareer 'number around 1 to 1.5 million people, mostly concentrated in the Lower Shabelle, Juba, and Bay regions.' They live mostly in agricultural areas and work as farmers.⁴³⁶ They suffered greatly from massive (racialised) discrimination and exclusion throughout the 20th and early 21st century.⁴³⁷ Somalis often use the derogative term '*jareer*' - referring to 'curly hair' - as insult. Members of majority clans distinguish themselves as 'Arabs' or 'high-born', distinct from the 'African'-looking and low-born Somalis. They use also the term '*adoon*' meaning 'slave' to define Bantu/Jareer.⁴³⁸ Bantu/Jareer suffered from dis-appropriation of their farms during the land-reforms in Somalia in the 1970s.⁴³⁹ In the 1990s their land and storages were looted by clan militias.⁴⁴⁰ In the view of the Bantu/Jareer activist Omar Eno, speaking out at a conference in the early 1990s, the Bantu/Jareer were reduced to slave status in Somalia.⁴⁴¹

Bantu/Jareer primarily engage in agriculture, cultivating e.g., maize, cassava, and rice. 'They are also involved in fishing and livestock herding to a lesser extent. Their agricultural activities have been central to their livelihoods, but they often lack the land rights and resources enjoyed by more dominant clans.'⁴⁴²

MEDA recently found that Bantu/Jareer children 'experience significantly lower school enrolment rates (ranging from 28 % to 40 %). Barriers such as poverty, lack of educational infrastructure in rural areas, and cultural barriers often contribute to these low rates.'⁴⁴³ They are treated as second-class citizens.⁴⁴⁴ Their population size is likely much larger 'than that reflected by their representation in government under the 4.5 formula', which favours the

⁴³¹ Declich, F., Can Boundaries not Border on One Another? The Zigula (Somali Bantu) between Somalia & Tanzania, pp. 170-71, 175

⁴³² Mukhtar, Mohamed H., Historical Dictionary of Somalia, 2003, p. 31

⁴³³ Lamberti, M., Die Somali-Dialekte, 1986, p. 8

⁴³⁴ Hassan Deqa, Somali Dialects in the United States: How Intelligible is Af-Maay to Speakers of Af-Maxaa? 2011, [url](#), p. 19; Mukhtar, Mohamed H., Historical Dictionary of Somalia, 2003, p. 30

⁴³⁵ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁴³⁶ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴³⁷ Besteman, C., Unraveling Somalia: Race, violence and the history of slavery, 1999, pp. 49-54

⁴³⁸ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴³⁹ UNHCR March 2018: World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Somalia: Bantu, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Cassanelli, L., Victims and vulnerable groups in southern Somalia, 1995, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ Besteman, C., Unraveling Somalia: Race, violence and the history of slavery, p. 236

⁴⁴² MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 14-15

⁴⁴³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁴⁴⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 7



majority clans.⁴⁴⁵ They still face land grabs and forced displacement due to lack of political influence.⁴⁴⁶ Discrimination also continues in IDP camps, where Bantu are discriminated and their women lack (clan) protection.⁴⁴⁷ Lack of societal and political participation and protracted discrimination ‘pushed some Bantu youth into joining al-Shabaab.’⁴⁴⁸ For further details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.⁴⁴⁹

(b) Bajuni

Bajuni are a specific ethnic group residing along the coast around Kismayo and on several islands off the Kismayo coast, such as Koyama, Chovai, and Chula.⁴⁵⁰ They speak their own language, Ki-Bajuni, which is a Bantu language close to Ki-Swahili.⁴⁵¹ Bajuni also reside across the border at the coast of northern Kenya.⁴⁵² Their culture is influenced by the Swahili and Arab traders.⁴⁵³ Bajuni residing along the coast or on the Bajuni islands engage in fishery. Some also engage in trade and agriculture.⁴⁵⁴ Bajuni, like other coastal communities practicing fishery, ‘suffer from reduced fish stocks due to environmental degradation.’⁴⁵⁵

Bajuni have long been marginalised by the dominant Somali clans in the region.⁴⁵⁶ Today, some Bajuni reside also in Mogadishu. In urban settings, they enjoy higher levels of healthcare access.⁴⁵⁷ In general, the Bajuni are a very small ethnic group of around 10 000 to 15 000 people.⁴⁵⁸ The Somali government recently estimated that Bajuni constitute 0.2% of Somali population.⁴⁵⁹ As in other cases mentioned above, demographic data in Somalia have, in the absence of reliable and recent census data, to be considered with caution.⁴⁶⁰ For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.

1.4.3. Minority clans

(a) Benadiri/group in the local context

The term Benadiri derives from the Persian word for ‘port, harbour’ (*bandar*). In the Somali setting it refers to a conglomerate of different groups that usually reside along the so called

⁴⁴⁵ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 30

⁴⁴⁶ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 28

⁴⁴⁷ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 42

⁴⁴⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 42

⁴⁴⁹ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), section 4

⁴⁵⁰ Nurse, D., Bajuni: people, society, geography, history, language, n.d., [url](#) p. 4

⁴⁵¹ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Walsh, M., The lost world of the Bajuni, 2010, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Walsh, M., The lost world of the Bajuni, 2010, [url](#)

⁴⁵³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁵⁴ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 13, 22

⁴⁵⁵ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 22.

⁴⁵⁶ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Walsh, M., The lost world of the Bajuni, 2010, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁵⁸ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁴⁵⁹ Somalia, Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan; Somali Sustainable Fisheries Development Project-Badmaal, 5 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 26

⁴⁶⁰ Shams Sheegow 2025, Dadka laga tirada badan yahay [People who are fewer in number], 2025, [url](#)



Benadir-coast between Mogadishu, Merka, Barawa, and up to Kismayo.⁴⁶¹ According to MEDA's 2025 report, groups belonging to the Benadiri spectrum are Gameedle, Shanshi, Moorshe, and Bravanese.⁴⁶² This, however, seems to be a rather limited description. According to Anita Adam, who has conducted the so far most comprehensive research on Benadiri (in Mogadishu), the following groups belong to this conglomerate: Bandhawow aka Bandhabow (consisting of various sub-lineages including Amin Khalfo, Bahar Sufi, Quruwaay, Oontiro, Sheebo, Ahmed Nuur, Gudmane and Ali Mohamed), Morshe (with the various sub-lineages including Reer Waamiin and Shukuureer), Iskashato (including the sub-lineages of Reer Sheikh Muumin, Indhaweyne. Askare, Shamsidiin, Aydaruusi, and Reer Manyo), Dhabarweyne (including the sub-lineages Abdi Yusuf, Oor Male, Habr Cayne, Qalin Shube, Shanshiye), Yakuub (with the sub-lineages Reer Ali Imaan, Faqi Ali, Abakarow, and Baa Fadal), Asharaf (with the lineages Hassan and Hussein each divided into various sub-lineages), Amudi (with the sub-lineages Omer Ma'alin Amuudi, Ahmed Amudi and others), Saddeh Geedi (with the sub-lineages Adan Dhere, Awareera, Reer Abdulle, Reer Sheek Salah, Indhaweyne, Reer Shiikh) and Reer Maanyo (comprising the sub-lineages Reer Ma'ow, Reer Shawish, Reer Umar, and Reer Aafi).⁴⁶³

The origin of many Benadiri groups goes back to travellers and traders who have come from the Arab Peninsula and Persia and have mixed with local Somalis.⁴⁶⁴ Many (but not all) Benadiri are considered 'light-skinned' (Somali: *gibil cad*) and are, indeed, often visibly so, looking sometimes like people from Yemen or Iraq.⁴⁶⁵ Some Benadiri, such as Asharaf/Hassan/Sarmaan, Bandhabow or Dhabarweyne are considered dark-skinned (*gibil madow*). Some, such as Asharaf/Hassan/Sarman, do not reside along the coast but mainly in the hinterland of southern Somalia, up to the Bakool region.⁴⁶⁶

Many members of Benadiri groups speak their own dialect of Af-Mahaa - considered as the standard Somali - called Af-Reer-Hamar or Af-Hamari (*Xamaari*).⁴⁶⁷ It is perceived to sound 'softer' than the Somali spoken in central and northern Somalia.⁴⁶⁸ Notably, Arabic, as second language, seems to be wider spread among Benaadiri-speakers than among other Af-Maha speakers. For many Benadiri, Arabic carries 'not only the weight of religious authority, but also implications of education, sophistication, and urbanity.'⁴⁶⁹ Due to geographical proximity, Benadiri residing in Merka and surroundings, which is close to the Af-Maay dialect region, would often also speak Af-Maay.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Markus Hoehne, Somalia researcher, 9 March 2025

⁴⁶² MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁶³ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 132-134.

⁴⁶⁴ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8 and 14

⁴⁶⁵ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 51 and 116-123; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁶⁶ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 154-157; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁶⁷ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 111; Lamberti, M., Die Somali-Dialekte, 1986, p. 61-66

⁴⁶⁸ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁶⁹ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 110

⁴⁷⁰ Hassan Deqa, Somali Dialects in the United States: How Intelligible is Af-Maay to Speakers of Af-Maxaa? 2011, [url](#), p. 5



According to the Minority Empowerment and Development Agency (MEDA) Report 2025, Benadiri number approximately 500 000.⁴⁷¹ The Benadiri people are typically either urbanites or farmers (e.g., around Afgoye in Lower Shabelle region, some 30 kilometres west of Mogadishu).⁴⁷² Along the coast they are known for their trade and commerce.⁴⁷³ During the civil war they suffered exploitation at the hands of clan militias.⁴⁷⁴ Their situation has improved in recent years. In urban settings, especially in Mogadishu, Benadiri people can get access to education.⁴⁷⁵ They also have gained some access to government institutions. For instance, Dr. Maryam Qaasim, a Benadiri woman born in Barawa, served in senior positions (including as minister, yet for a subordinate portfolio) in the Somali government (2012-2017).⁴⁷⁶ There are other Benadiri in government today. Inter-marriage between Benadiri and other Somali clans is not restricted.⁴⁷⁷ Still, in everyday life, members of the Benadiri groups are considerably less powerful than members of dominant clans and face socio-political exclusion.⁴⁷⁸ For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.

(b) Tunni, Eyle, Geledi and Begedi

Tunni, Eyle, Begedi, and Geledi are part of the Rahanweyn clan-family. Rahanweyn is divided into the clans Merifle and Digil, each being divided into various sub-clans and lineages. Rahanweyn have been marginalised until the early 1990s. From the mid-1990s onward, they gained power in south-western Somalia and today (early 2025) are not considered a minority group anymore.⁴⁷⁹ Still, some particular groups within Rahanweyn have a position akin to minority groups in some regards.⁴⁸⁰ Tunni are part of Rahanweyn/Digil. Some Tunni live as agriculturalists and pastoralists in the hinterland of the southern Benadir coast. Others are city dwellers and live in Barawa. They are traders and/or fishermen. A third group called Tunni Torre is composed of people of Bantu origin, possibly ex-slaves and/or former clients of other Tunni groups.⁴⁸¹ Those Tunni residing along the coast have cultural and linguistic ties to the Benadiri. Some Tunni would also speak Af-Maay. They face discrimination based on clan politics.⁴⁸²

The Eyle are part of Rahanweyn/Merifle. They are a small group of between 50 000 to 100 000 people who live primarily in the coastal areas of southern Somalia. They engage in

⁴⁷¹ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁷² Sheekhnor Kaassim, Telephone interview, 2 April 2025. Sheekhnor Kaassim is a Benadiri elder based in the USA

⁴⁷³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8, 12 and 15

⁴⁷⁴ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 248

⁴⁷⁵ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁴⁷⁶ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁷⁷ Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025. Shamso Sheegow is a Somali writer based in Sweden with extended contacts in Barawa. She runs an NGO supporting environmental projects in and around Barawa

⁴⁷⁸ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁷⁹ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁸⁰ Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

⁴⁸¹ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 243; Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

⁴⁸² MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025



fishing and animal husbandry.⁴⁸³ Eyle are known for their distinct language. They are generally considered to be part of the broader Benadiri group. They face socio-political marginalisation.⁴⁸⁴

Begedi and Geledi are part of Rahanweyn/Digil. Still, they are often considered to be part of the Benadiri minority groups. Historically, particularly the Geledi were once powerful and had their own sultanate (until the mid-19th century). But during the civil war Geledi and Begedi were overrun and exploited especially by Hawiye clan militias who took control of their homeland.⁴⁸⁵ Geledi and Begedi typically reside in Lower Shabelle region, especially in and around Afgoye. They are usually farmers and/or traders.⁴⁸⁶ For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.⁴⁸⁷

(c) Shiidle

The Shiidle people are a small group in South Central Somalia. They are considered to be part of the broader Benadiri group. They have face social exclusion and discrimination within Somali society.⁴⁸⁸

1.4.4. Clans specialised in Islamic services

Traditionally, Asharaf and Sheikhal were respected by other clans as ‘religious people’ or even ‘teachers of religion’. The name Asharaf derives from the Arabic word ‘sharif’ which means ‘honour’.⁴⁸⁹ Members of both groups are considered descendants of the family of the Prophet Mohamed who have immigrated into the Somali peninsula long ago. Until the outbreak of the civil war, they had protection arrangements with dominant clans among whom they lived. Yet, during the civil war in the 1990s they lost clan protection and were exploited and subjugated by clan militias.⁴⁹⁰

Asharaf consist of the main groups Hassan and Hussein. Many reside in and around Mogadishu and up to Afgoye. Some also reside among Digil in Bakool region.⁴⁹¹ Those Asharaf residing along the southern Somali coast are considered part of the Benadiri conglomerate.⁴⁹² Other Asharaf reside in ‘southern interior at Baidoa, Hudur, and Bullo Hawo, in the Baay, Bakool and Gedo regions respectively. These Asharaf communities are most usually from the Hasan branch of Asharaf lineages.⁴⁹³ Sheikhal - also known as Shekhal or Sheikasha, i.e. ‘the Shekhal people’ - are divided in the main lineages Loboge, Jazeera and Aw Qutub. Aw Qutub mainly reside in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. Jazeera and Loboge reside mainly in and around Mogadishu. Most Asharaf and Sheikhal are considered ‘light

⁴⁸³ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁸⁴ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁸⁵ Luling, V., Farmers from Arabia: The role of gibil cad groups in the interior of Southern Somalia, 2010, p. 314.

⁴⁸⁶ Sheekhnor Kaassim, Telephone interview, 2 April 2025

⁴⁸⁷ EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁸⁹ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁹⁰ Minority Rights Group – Somalia, 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁹² Minority Rights Group – Somalia, 2024, [url](#); Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 140

⁴⁹³ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 141.



skinned’ (*gibil cad*); yet some, like Asharaf/Hassan/Sarman and Sheikhal/Aw Qutob are ‘dark skinned’ (*gibil madow*). In recent years they gained some political and economic influence in southern Somalia again. They also have access to education. Some Asharaf and Sheikhal engage successfully in businesses, including large-scale business in Mogadishu. Still, members of both groups occasionally face discrimination and human rights abuses due to their non-major-clan origins.⁴⁹⁴ For further background information see section 4.3 Groups specialised in religious services of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#) (September 2021).⁴⁹⁵

1.4.5. Mixed-marriages, implications and sanctioning

Marriages are an important means of forging social, economic and political ties in Somali society. Connections established through marriage are called ‘*xidid*’ in Somali, literally meaning ‘root’. Marriages often establish political alliances. They are forged between families whose members consider themselves basically as equal. This means that marriages between a ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ group or between a majority and a minority group traditionally are frowned upon. In everyday life, they still happen, due to individual preferences and romantic feelings of the individuals involved.⁴⁹⁶ Yet, there are socially sanctioned limits. Minorities in Somalia are considered weak. But some of them have a better social status than others. Many minority groups are predominantly endogamous, meaning that they marry among themselves. Yet, intermarriage between majority and minority groups like Asharaf, Sheikhal and most Benadiri groups is accepted. However, in these cases, typically the women are coming from the minority and the men are coming from the majority group. The female partners and their families of birth are usually (at least politically) dependent on their husbands and their families of birth and protection by them. In other cases, particularly concerning Gaboye and Somali Bantu/Jareer, intermarriages with members of majority clans are generally not accepted.⁴⁹⁷ If a man from a dominant clan marries a Gaboye or Somali Bantu/Jareer woman, his own family may disapprove, and his children will likely be insulted. If a man from the Gaboye or Somali Bantu/Jareer marries a woman from a majority clan, this typically produces major conflict between the families involved. Normally, the family of the woman rejects such a marriage. Her relatives can even threaten or attack the (prospective) husband and/or his family.⁴⁹⁸ Under Al-Shabaab, intermarriages between majority and minority groups happen more frequently.⁴⁹⁹

1.5. Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues

Clan conflicts can be triggered by various reasons, including access to resources (water, grazing land or pasture), competition over land and land rights, access to jobs and markets (e.g., the local *qaad* market), breach of women’s or other vulnerable categories’ protection

⁴⁹⁴ Minority Rights Group – Somalia, 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁵ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 69-72

⁴⁹⁶ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁴⁹⁷ Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

⁴⁹⁸ Kemal Dahir Ashour, Telephone interview, 10 March 2025

⁴⁹⁹ Wardheer News 09. April 2024: Married in the shawows: The wives of Al-Shabaab, [url](#)



status (see below), insults, competition over political and administrative power.⁵⁰⁰ For more background information on clan conflict drivers see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles \(September 2021\)](#).⁵⁰¹

Clan conflicts and disputes can be settled through traditional reconciliation mechanisms based on customary law and managed by clan elders. However, without a proper enforcement of the compensation or peace-agreement, in the absence of implementation follow-ups, or in case of failure to address the root causes of the dispute, clan conflicts tend to recur.⁵⁰² Within this context, another shortcoming of the traditional reconciliation mechanism, which is based on the *diya* institute, or *mag* in Somali – see for further details the [EUAA Somalia: Targeted profiles \(September 2021\)](#) and [EUAA Somalia: Actors \(June 2021\)](#) – lies in the fact that ‘blood compensation’ is paid to the victim’s clan,⁵⁰³ or, as Hoehne puts it, to the victim’s extended patrilineal family – the *diya* paying group - not to the victim’s closest family.⁵⁰⁴ This may work as a trigger for revenge at a later stage.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, ‘blood debts can be put on hold, banked, sometimes for years, until an appropriately respected figure comes of age to be murdered’.⁵⁰⁶

Clan status and power also determine, same as in other contexts, the level of ‘blood compensation’ or revenge, with victims of minority or marginalised clans ‘worth’ less than their counterparts from more powerful clans.⁵⁰⁷ Minority or marginalised groups have less negotiation power, and capacity to enforce agreements, and often need to rely on more powerful clans for protection.⁵⁰⁸

1.5.1. Mapping of major clan conflicts/feuds

Various experts interviewed by the EUAA indicated that inter-clan conflicts, rivalries, and animosity has substantially increased across the country during the past two years.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁰ EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 76-77

⁵⁰¹ EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 76-85

⁵⁰² Said Bile A., RVI, Beyond the accord – The effectiveness of local peace structures in managing inter-clans conflicts in Puntland state – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), pp. 8, 17-19, 29; see also EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 78

⁵⁰³ Said Bile A., RVI, Beyond the accord – The effectiveness of local peace structures in managing inter-clans conflicts in Puntland state – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 22

⁵⁰⁴ Hoehne, M. V., Input received during the peer-review process, 23 April 2025

⁵⁰⁵ Said Bile A., RVI, Beyond the accord – The effectiveness of local peace structures in managing inter-clans conflicts in Puntland state – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 22

⁵⁰⁶ Harding A., The mayor of Mogadishu, 2016, p. 154

⁵⁰⁷ Harding A., The mayor of Mogadishu, 2016, pp. 153-154; see also Hoehne, M. V., Political Orientations and Repertoires of Identification: State and Identity Formation in Northern Somalia, 2011, [url](#), pp. 102-104; EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 78-79

⁵⁰⁸ Menkhaus, K., State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts, September, 2003, p. 412. As cited in EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 78

⁵⁰⁹ Mohamed Abdullahi, Telephone interview, 18 March 2025. Mohamed Abdullahi is the Director of programmes at Horncenter Dialogue for Peace, Governance, and Development (The Horncenter), an independent, not-for-profit organization based in Dushamared, Galmudug State of Somalia. He is an expert in reconciliation, peace-building, and governance; Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview, 19 March 2025. Farhia Mohamud is a researcher and Hirshabelle political and security analyst at Somali Public Agenda, a leading research organisation based in Mogadishu; Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview, 18 March 2025. The independent political and security analyst based in Jubbaland works as a consultant and has



Based on ACLED data, inter- and intra-clan conflicts in the country caused in the reference period more than 472 security incidents resulting in 1 214 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵¹⁰ These incidents included clashes, various forms of clan-related violence as well as ‘revenge’ killings, which were mentioned as the motivation in almost 200 cases, accounting for 641 estimated fatalities, and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵¹¹

Based on a number of interviews conducted on the topic, an overview of the main clan conflicts, feuds and disputes active or potentially active in Somalia in the reference period is offered below.

(a) Jubbaland

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in Jubbaland, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in Jubbaland, in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds, and competition over resources caused 24 reported instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, notably in Gedo and the Lower Juba regions. Such instances were responsible for at least 40 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵¹² A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Reer Aw Hassan/Marehan (Darood) and Gababweyne (Rahanweyn) vs Moalim Weyne (Rahanweyn), in Luuq, Gedo. Luuq District has recently become the epicentre of clan conflict, primarily driven by issues related to land ownership, governance structure (political power), and resources.⁵¹³ The conflict has raged the area intermittently in the reference period, causing dozens of deaths,⁵¹⁴ and reportedly displacing more than 40 000 people,⁵¹⁵ although exact figures are contested;⁵¹⁶

long-standing experience with conflict analysis; see also UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 9; ACAPS, Somalia – Impact of clan conflicts, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with clan militias as Actor 1 vs clan militias as Actor 2, and ‘unidentified armed groups’, ‘unidentified clan militias’, and ‘unidentified communal militias’ non included

⁵¹¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵¹² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including ‘civilians’) at FMS level

⁵¹³ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵¹⁴ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵¹⁵ UNOCHA, Somalia: Flash Update, Flash Update No.1 Displacement due to inter-clan conflict in Luuq town, Jubaland State of Somalia, 14 July 2024, [url](#)

⁵¹⁶ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025



- Marehan (Dorood) vs Gelidle (Mirefle) in Bardhere district, Gedo region,⁵¹⁷ which is currently dormant; the district is also the site of the political rivalry between the Jubbaland state and the FGS, which has recently caused armed clashes between the two;⁵¹⁸
- Biyamal (Dir) vs Ogaden (Darood), in Jamaame, Lower Juba; currently dormant, the conflict between the two clans revolves around land ownership, governance structure, and power-sharing within the district;⁵¹⁹
- Majeerten (various sub-clans/Darood) vs Majeerten (various sub-clans/Darood) in Kismayo, Lower Juba, currently dormant;⁵²⁰
- Majeerteen (Darood) vs the Cormale (or Cawrmale, 0.5 minority group) in the Lower Juba region, south of Kismayo. The conflict, which is driven by disputes over land ownership and resources, recently gave rise to armed confrontations, resulting in significant loss of life and the displacement of many people.⁵²¹

(b) South-West State

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in the South-West state, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in the South-West State, in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds, and competition over resources caused 56 reported instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, resulting in at least 146 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵²² A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Gelidle (Mirifle) vs Dabarre (Digil) clans, in Dinsoor district, Bay region;
- Leysan (Mirifle/Rahaweyn) versus SWS security forces. In Bardaale town, Burhakaba District, Bay Region, the Laysan have clashed with the Bardaale Police and SWS Darawish due to their ambitions to lead the SWS;
- Gaaljeel (Hawiye) vs Abgal (Hawiye), between Afgoye and Wanlaweyne districts, Lower Shabelle region;
- Galjeel (Hawiye) versus Shantalemod (Digil/Rahanweyn) and other Mirifle clans (Rahanweyn), in the Wanlaweyne District, in the Lower Shabelle region. The Galjeel have established illegal checkpoints in the Yaqbariweyne area, on the main road that connects Mogadishu-Baidoa, clashing with Digil-Mirifle clans as well as with SWS security forces;

⁵¹⁷ Ibrahim Issaq, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7 March 2025. Ibrahim Issaq is a Somali development practitioner and Chair of Poverty Concern, a Somali NGO based in UK with field expertise in South-West and Jubbaland States of Somalia.

⁵¹⁸ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵¹⁹ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵²⁰ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵²¹ Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15 March 2025

⁵²² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including 'civilians') at FMS level



- Geledi (Digil) and Wa'daan (Hawiye) vs Habar Gedir (Hawiye), in Afgoye district, Lower Shabelle region.
- Biyamal (Dir) vs Habar-Gedir (Hawiye), in Marka district, Lower Shabelle region; Marka district is home to Biyamal, Digil (Rahanweyne), 12 Koofi (Benadiri), and Madow (Bantu), who claim historical rights to the region over the Habar-Gedir;
- Garre (Digil/Rahanweyne) versus Jiido (Digil/Rahanweyne), in the Qoryoole District, Lower Shabelle Region.⁵²³

(c) Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) – Mogadishu

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in BRA, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in the reference period, no security incidents were to be attributed to inter-clan conflicts, feuds, or competition over resources among clan groups residing in Mogadishu.⁵²⁴ Local Somali sources residing in Mogadishu and interviewed on the matter, confirmed this analysis.⁵²⁵ According to one interviewee the local population is rather preoccupied with establishing who is genuinely opposing Al-Shabaab and who is not.⁵²⁶

(d) Hirshabelle

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in Hirshabelle, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in Hirshabelle, in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds, and competition over resources caused more than 133 instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, resulting in at least 260 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵²⁷ A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Abgaal (Hawiye) versus Hawadle (Hawiye), in areas under Jalalaqsi district, Hiraan Region, as well as in El Baraf district, Middle Shabelle Region;
- Hawadle (Hawiye) vs Makane (Bantu), in Beletweyne town, Beletweyne District, Hiraan region; and within this context, Ali Madahweyne (Hawadle/Hawiye) vs Makane (Bantu clan), in Beletweyne District, Hiraan region;
- Moobileen (Mudulod/Hawiye) versus Shiidle (Bantu clan), in Jowhar District, Middle Shabelle Region;

⁵²³ Ibrahim Issaq, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7, 10, 16 March 2025

⁵²⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ Somali diplomatic official and Mogadishu native, Telephone interview, 18 March 2025. The Somali diplomatic official and Mogadishu native works in the international sector and has first-hand experience of security issues in the capital of Somalia; Somali sociological and religious analyst, Mogadishu resident, Telephone interview and email exchange, 17 March 2025

⁵²⁶ Somali sociological and religious analyst, Mogadishu resident, Telephone interview and email exchange, 17 March 2025

⁵²⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including 'civilians') at FMS level



- Bantu clan versus Badiade (Gugundhabe/Hawiye), in Jalalaqsi District, Hiraan region;
- Makane (Bantu) vs Jijeele (Gugundhabe/Hawiye) in Beletweyne District, Hiraan region;
- Abdalle Arone (Abgaal/Hawiye) versus Agoonyar Gabane and Obakar Gabane (Mohamed Muse/Abgaal/Hawiye) subclans, in Adale District, Middle Shabelle Region;
- Hawadle (Hawiye) versus Badiade (Gugundhabe/Hawiye), in Jalalaqsi District, Hiraan region;
- Agoon and Ali Madahweyne subclans (Hawadle/Hawiye) versus Ceyr subclan (Harbargidir/Hawiye) in Matabaan, Hiiraan region;
- Adan Dhiblabe Turyare versus Suubiye Dhiblabe Turyare sub-clans of the Mohamed Muse clan (Wa'budhan/Abgaal/Hawiye), in Jowhar District, Middle Shabelle Region;
- Ili Omar subclan (Abgaal/Hawiye) and Reer Mataan subclan (Abgaal/Hawiye) in Warsheikh district, Middle Shabelle region;
- Mohamed Muse subclan (Wa'budhan/Abgaal/Hawiye) versus Abdalle Arone (Abgaal/Hawiye), near Adalle district, Middle Shabelle region;
- Faqay Omar (Dir) versus Hawadle (Hawiye) in villages under Beletweyne near the Ethiopian border.⁵²⁸

(e) Galmudug

Galmudug is predominantly inhabited by clans and sub-clans of the Hawiye clan family, as well as smaller enclaves of Dir and Darood.⁵²⁹ For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in Galmudug, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

With its particularly heterogenous clan structure, in Galmudug inter- and intra-clan conflicts are prevalent.⁵³⁰ Based on ACLED data, in Galmudug,⁵³¹ clan conflicts, clan feuds and competition over resources caused almost 220 instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings in the reference period. These resulted in at least 590 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵³² A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Ayr (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Duduble (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) in the outskirts of Dhusamarreb district, Galgaduud Region;
- Loboge (Sheikhal/associated to Hawiye) versus Saleban Abdalle (Surre/Dir) in Towfiq and Afbarwaaqo districts, Mudug (West);
- Surre (Dir) versus Marehan (Darood), in Caabudwaaq and in Laandheer in between Abudwaaq and Herale districts, Galgaduud Region;

⁵²⁸ Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview and email exchange, 5-6 March 2025

⁵²⁹ International Crisis Group, Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, Africa Briefing no. 193, 25 September 2023, [url](#), p. 4; Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), p. 28

⁵³⁰ Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 25-26, 28; International Crisis Group, Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, Africa Briefing no. 193, 25 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 11-13

⁵³¹ For the purposes of this analysis, following districts were included for Mudug region: Galkayo (entirely), Hobyo, and Harardheere

⁵³² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including 'civilians') at FMS level



- Surre (Dir) opposing the new Galwaq region, in the Herale ‘district’, Galgaduud;
- Saleban (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Marehan (Darood), in Balliseenyooole area, Abudwaaq District, Galgaduud Region;
- Saleban (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Duduble (Habar Gedir/Hawiye), in villages near Adaado district, Galgaduud Region;
- Saleban (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Ayr (Habar Gedir/Hawiye), in Hanabuure and Qalanqale villages in Cadaado and Dhusamarreb districts, Galgaduud Region;
- Sa’ad (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Wgardhac (Marehan/Darood) in Dhabad and Galisnoor
- Ayr (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Marehan (Darood) in Balnanbale district;
- Ayaanle (Ayr/Habar Gidir/Hawiye) versus Absiiye (Ayr/Habar Gidir/Hawiye) in Laas-Xaadow - this conflict started relatively recently, in 2018, when initial clan disagreements escalated leading to clashes and tensions;
- Murusade (Hawiye) versus Ayr (Habar Gedir/Hawiye), whose clan conflict started in the middle of 2024;
- Murusade (Hawiye) versus Duduble (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) in the villages near Ceelbuur (Al-Shabaab-controlled area) but were stopped by Al-Shabaab.⁵³³

(f) Puntland

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in the South-West state, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in Puntland,⁵³⁴ in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds and competition over resources caused more than 40 instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, resulting in at least 144 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵³⁵ A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Sa’ad (Habar Gedir/Hawiye) versus Leelkase (Darood). In Galkayo District, Mudug [North] Region, notably in the Galdogob district and the Bandiiradley area, the two clans have clashed and practiced revenge killings over the past 40 years including after the still to-be-finalised reconciliation process that started in 2020.⁵³⁶
- Dhulbahante (Darood) versus Omar Mohamoud (Majeerteen/Darood). Between Nugal and Sool region, in the Adadda area, which intersects the border with Ethiopia, the two clans have been feuding for decades.⁵³⁷

⁵³³ Mohamed Abdullahi, Telephone interview and email exchange, 26 February 2025, 3 March 2025

⁵³⁴ For the purposes of this analysis, following regions were included as part of Puntland: Nugal, Bari and Mudug North. For Mudug north the analysis comprises only Jariiban and Galdogob districts, Galkayo as a whole district was included under Galmudug (Mudug)

⁵³⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including ‘civilians’) at FMS level

⁵³⁶ PDRC, Assessment of Leelkase and Sa’ad conflict and peace, 2022, [url](#), pp. 15-17, 28-29

⁵³⁷ Said Bile A., RVI, Beyond the accord – The effectiveness of local peace structures in managing inter-clans conflicts in Puntland state – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 15



- Marehan (Darood) versus Saad (Habar Gedir/Hawiye). In Galkayo District, Mudug [North] Region, the two clans have clashed in the west part of the district over the past few years, but the conflict was dormant as of February 2025.⁵³⁸
- Issa Mohamud (Majerteen/Darood) versus Dulbahante. In Burtinle District, Nugal region, the two clans have intermittently clashed in the past few years in the Kalabayr area.⁵³⁹
- Omar Mahmood (Majerteen/Darood) versus Saad (Habar Gedir/Hawiye). The two clans have clashed in the past in the Galkayo District and in the Jiraan District in the Mudug [North] region but the conflict was dormant as of February 2025.⁵⁴⁰
- Surre (Dir) versus Sheikhal (associated to Hawiye). In the Jariiban as well as Hobyo district, Mudug [North] Region, the two clans have clashed repeatedly in the course of 2023-2024 while a mediation process was on-going as of February 2025.⁵⁴¹

(g) Sool, Sanaag and contested regions

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in the contested regions, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in the contested regions,⁵⁴² in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds and competition over resources caused almost 90 instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, resulting in at least 161 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵⁴³ A non-exhaustive list of active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds during and at the end of the reference period is offered below:

- Dhulbahante (Darood) vs Habar Yonis (Isaaq), in Erigabo, Sanaag, and in Aynabo, Sool;
- Dhulbahante (Darood) vs Habar Je'lo (Isaaq), in Aynabo, Sool and in Buuhoodle, Togdhere;
- Dhulbahante (various sub-clans/Darood) vs Dhulbahante (various sub-clans/Darood), in Las Anod, Sool;
- Habar Je'lo (Isaaq) vs Habar Yonis (Isaaq) in Erigabo, Sanaag, and in El Afweyn, Sanaag, on-going negotiations as of March 2025;
- Warsangeli (various subclans/Darood) vs Warsangeli (various subclans/Darood) in Erigabo and Lasqoray, Sanaag.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁸ Somali conflict and development expert based in Puntland, Online interview, 18 February 2025. The Somali conflict and development expert based in Puntland has decades-long experience with conflict research and analysis

⁵³⁹ Somali conflict and development expert based in Puntland, Online interview, 18 February 2025

⁵⁴⁰ Somali conflict and development expert based in Puntland, Online interview, 18 February 2025

⁵⁴¹ Somali conflict and development expert based in Puntland, Online interview, 18 February 2025

⁵⁴² For the purposes of this analysis, following regions (and districts) were included as part of the contested regions: Sool, Sanaag, as well as Buuhoodle from the Togdheer region.

⁵⁴³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with filters local clan militias as Actor 1, and as Actor 2 (including 'civilians') at FMS level

⁵⁴⁴ Said Haji Nuur, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. Said Haji Nuur is a humanitarian and development official based in Garowe



(h) Somaliland

For detailed and historical information on the clan composition in the contested regions, including information on sub-clans, please see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

Based on ACLED data, in Somaliland,⁵⁴⁵ in the reference period, clan conflicts, clan feuds and competition over resources caused more than 20 instances of clan-related violence and revenge killings, resulting in at least 16 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵⁴⁶

A non-exhaustive list of currently active or potentially active clan conflicts/feuds is offered below:

- Habar Yonis (Isaaq) vs Issa Muse (Issa) in Ali Sahid village, Greater Burao District, Togdheer;
- Dhulbahante (Darood) vs Soolomadow (Habar Je'lo/Isaaq), in Qorilugud, Togdheer;
- Habar Je'lo (Isaaq) vs Habar Awal (Isaaq), in Burco district, Togdheer;
- Gadabursi (Dir) vs. Jibril Abokor, Sa'ad Muse, Habar Awal (Isaaq), in El Bardaale, Gabiley, Waqooyi Galbeed, currently dormant;⁵⁴⁷

Other rivalries in Somaliland revolve around electoral competitions and did not lead to armed violence:

- Garhajis - Habar Yonis and Idagale – (Isaaq) vs Habar Awal (Isaaq), in Hargeisa;
- Sa'ad Muse (Habar Awal/Isaaq) vs Idagale (Isaaq) and Habar Yonis (Isaaq) in Hargeisa;
- Gadabursi subclans (Dir) vs Gadabursi subclans (Dir), in Boorama, Awdal.⁵⁴⁸

1.5.2. Clan revenge and vulnerability in clan conflicts

(a) For men

Most of those directly involved in clan (or lineage, or family) conflicts are men between 15 and 40 years old, approximately. Children and men around between 15 and 25 would typically be mobilised by elders to form lineage or clan militias, engage in attacks or put up defence positions.⁵⁴⁹

Perceived acts of humiliation deriving from clan conflicts or linked to any other triggers mentioned above, can result in revenge killings. These acts usually target the perceived perpetrator(s), however, if the clan refuses to hand them over, other members of the clan may

⁵⁴⁵ For the purposes of this analysis, following regions were included as part of Somaliland: Awdal, Wogoyi Galbeed, and Togdheer, with the exclusion of Buuhoodle district.

⁵⁴⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 31 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ Conflict and peacebuilding researcher based in Somaliland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7-8 April 2025. The Conflict and peacebuilding researcher has long-standing experience with conflict analysis and resolution

⁵⁴⁸ Conflict and peacebuilding researcher based in Somaliland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7-8 April 2025

⁵⁴⁹ EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-78, 84



be targeted.⁵⁵⁰ For more background information on clan revenge for men see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles \(September 2021\)](#).

(b) For women and girls

Women, children and the elderly are rarely directly targeted in feuds and clan conflicts.⁵⁵¹ Members of these groups are traditionally referred to as '*sacrosanct*' - in Somali *bir ma geydo*, which means literally 'spared from the spear'. However, while they can still be incidental victims of attacks, they can also be subject to acts of targeting or indiscriminate violence at the hands of younger militiamen who often do not comply with traditional rules and codes of conduct.⁵⁵²

Moreover, women can also be commodified as subjects of negotiation, whereby one or more unmarried girls from the murder's family are offered for marriage to the victim's group, on top of the compensation in livestock or the equivalent. This tradition, still practiced in certain parts of the country, is called *godob reeb*, or '*godobtiir*' depending on the areas.⁵⁵³ For more information on the position and situation of women, including how they are specifically impacted by clan conflicts and reconciliation processes, see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles \(September 2021\)](#).⁵⁵⁴

More in general, women often play an important role as peace promoters in clan conflicts, although not yet acknowledged by other influential community actors, such as clan elders and religious scholars.⁵⁵⁵ Historically and more recently they have substantially contributed to various reconciliation processes throughout Somalia.⁵⁵⁶ Despite this, women are still side-lined in the decision-making processes.⁵⁵⁷ Conversely, women can also engage in conflicts and incite or demand revenge for the harming or the killing of their clan members and relatives.⁵⁵⁸

In the reference period, women were directly targeted in the context of acts of clan revenge on several occasions. Intercepted and reported instances include:⁵⁵⁹

- on 22 April 2023, Habar Gedir Sa'ad sub clan militia assaulted and raped six females from the Hawadle clan near Dhabad village in Cabudwaaq (Galgaduud).⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁰ ACCORD, Clans in Somalia – Report on a lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition), 2009, [url](#), p. 21. As cited in EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 77

⁵⁵¹ ICRC, Spared from the Spear: Traditional Somali Behaviour in warfare, February 1998, [url](#), pp. 29-44; EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 77

⁵⁵² EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 83-84

⁵⁵³ Hoehne, M. V., The rupture of territoriality and the diminishing relevance of cross-cutting ties in Somalia after 1990, 2016, pp. 1389-1390; EUAA Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 83-84

⁵⁵⁴ EASO, Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 83-85

⁵⁵⁵ HIPS, Galmudug – Governance, State Formation, Conflict Dynamics, and Reconciliation, March 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁵⁵⁶ PDRC, Assessment of Lelkase and Sa'ad conflict and peace, 2022, [url](#), p. 21; HIPS, Galmudug – Governance, State Formation, Conflict Dynamics, and Reconciliation, March 2024, [url](#), p. 20; Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 39-40

⁵⁵⁷ HIPS, Galmudug – Governance, State Formation, Conflict Dynamics, and Reconciliation, March 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁵⁵⁸ Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), p. 39, footnote no. 72

⁵⁵⁹ with clan militias as Actor 1 vs clan militias as Actor 2, filter 'revenge', second filter 'women', 'girl', or 'female'

⁵⁶⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM40139



- on 30 August 2024, overnight, Habar Yoonis-Muse Ismail sub-clan ambushed vehicles carrying Dhulbahante-Naleeye Ahmed sub-clan in Ceerigaabo town (Sanaag), killing, among others, a woman and injuring other people;⁵⁶¹
- on 11 September 2024, Habar Gedir Ayr sub-clan militia killed two civilians including a woman from Habar Gedir Saleban sub-clan in Lamatuka area in Gaalyeel village near Dhuusamarreeb (Galgaduud);⁵⁶²
- on 3 October 2024, Habar Gedir Duduble clan militia attacked civilian pastoralists from another clan in Gaalo village near Dhuusamarreeb (Galgaduud), injuring, among others, a woman and a young girl;⁵⁶³
- on 25 January 2025, overnight, Marehan clan militia killed two pastoralists including a woman from Habar Gedir clan near Cabudwaaq town (Galgaduud);⁵⁶⁴
- on 16 February 2025, Hawadle clan militia killed one woman from the Habar Gedir Ayr sub-clan in the Madah Maroodi area, near Belet Weyne (Hiraan);⁵⁶⁵
- on 18 February 2025, Mursade clan militia attacked civilians from Habar Gedir-Ayr sub-clan in between El-Yaasiin and El-Bahaay, near Wahbo, Eel Buur (Galgaduud), causing the death of two civilians, including a woman.⁵⁶⁶

1.6. Individual supporting or perceived as supporting the FGS/the International Community, and/or as opposing Al-Shabaab

Potential targets of Al-Shabaab frequent attacks are: people officially representing or de facto associated with the FGS or the FMS administrations, including civilians; people working, formally or informally, to support their institutions, including civilians; the national and the federal security forces as well as other opposed *darwish* or clan militias; the international community; people opposing or perceived as opposing Al-Shabaab, including collaborators and informers of the above mentioned bodies and institutions.⁵⁶⁷

Al-Shabaab's intended targets belong to a broad range of profiles, with different ranking, status, and position. Although higher profiles might be preferred by the organisation, lower ones are also and more easily targeted. Moreover, forms and modalities of the targeting often affect 'indiscriminately' by-standers and the civilian population at large, when they are not the target in the first place.⁵⁶⁸

For background information on the scope of the targeting and the justification for the attacks please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Targeted profiles \(September 2021\)](#).⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45576

⁵⁶² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45680

⁵⁶³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46689

⁵⁶⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47856

⁵⁶⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49021

⁵⁶⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49072

⁵⁶⁷ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 85-87

⁵⁶⁸ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 85-87

⁵⁶⁹ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 85-97



1.6.1. Civilian government and governance officials, district commissioners

For specific background information on the rationale and the reasons behind the targeting of government officials, at FGS and FMS level, as well as at district level, please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).⁵⁷⁰

High-ranking government officials. Prominent and high-ranking government officials were targeted during the reference period on several occasions. The list below provides for some illustrative and non-exhaustive examples:

- on 6 April 2023, the military convoy escorting the governor of Hiraaan was attacked with a remote controlled IED;⁵⁷¹
- On 9 April 2023, the Minister of Public Works' residency in Mogadishu, in the vicinity of Villa Somalia, was targeted with mortars, likely by Al-Shabaab, causing the death of the minister and other government officials, including the Deputy Director of the Presidential Palace;⁵⁷²
- on 11 May 2023, the vehicle of the deputy governor of finance of Banadir region was targeted with an IED planted by Al-Shabaab;⁵⁷³
- on 15 September 2023, Al-Shabaab attempted at the life of Galmudug State President near Hobyo (Mudug);⁵⁷⁴
- on 19 February 2024, a suspected Al-Shabaab threw a hand grenade targeting a high-profile Jubaland state official in Kismayo town;⁵⁷⁵
- on 15 March 2024, Al-Shabaab attacked the Syl Hotel in Mogadishu, which is popular with government officials, injuring the government spokesperson, along with three members of the parliament, and causing 30 additional casualties;⁵⁷⁶
- on 22 July 2024, Al-Shabaab targeted with an IED the Jubaland Minister of Religious Affair, while escorted by the Jubaland security forces convoy in between Kismayo and Abdale Birole village (Lower Juba). The minister and two soldiers were injured;⁵⁷⁷
- on 27 February 2025, Al-Shabaab fired 11 mortar shells toward the Aden Adde International Airport area in Mogadishu - Waaberi (Banadir), on occasion of the Ethiopian Prime Minister's official visit to Mogadishu and at the presence of the Somalia President;⁵⁷⁸
- on 18 March 2025, Al-Shabaab attempted at the life of the President, with a major IED attack on his convoy transiting through Mogadishu,⁵⁷⁹ which caused at least 10 fatalities, including a journalist;⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁰ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 88-91

⁵⁷¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM39986

⁵⁷² Somali Dispatch, Mortars hit Villa Somalia and the residency of the Minister of Petroleum, 10 April 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM40233

⁵⁷⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42267

⁵⁷⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43707

⁵⁷⁶ BBC, Somalia's Syl hotel attacked by al-Shabab fighters in Mogadishu, 15 March 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45263

⁵⁷⁸ AA, Mortars fired toward airport in Somali capital amid Ethiopian premier's visit: Report, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ Reuters, Somali militants target presidential convoy in bomb attack, president safe, 19 March 2025, [url](#); AA, Somali president survives al-Shabaab assassination attempt, officials say, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁰ Horn Observer, Somalia's President Narrowly Escapes Al-Shabaab Bomb Attack; Media Station Briefly Shutdown, Dozen Journalists Arrested, 18 March 2025, [url](#)



- on 19 March 2025, Al-Shabaab, overnight, targeted the Southwest State Minister with an IED planted at the gate of his residence in Baidoa (Bay).⁵⁸¹

Government officials. Other government officials and employees, along with civilians, were directly or indiscriminately targeted by Al-Shabaab on various occasions during the reference period. These instances included:

- indiscriminate attacks in hotels, restaurants, and cafés, such as: on 10 June 2023, when Al-Shabaab attacked the Pearl Beach Hotel, popular with government officials, causing about 16 casualties;⁵⁸² on 14 July 2024, when Al-Shabaab targeted a popular café in Mogadishu – Top Coffee, where security and government workers, along with civilians, meet at night; on the occasion they were watching the EURO 2024 football final when 9 civilians were killed and 20 others injured;⁵⁸³ on 16 July 2024, when Al-Shabaab suicide bomber targeted civilian employee and officials of Banadir Region Administration (BRA) in Jawi coffee house in Mogadishu - Hamar Weyne (Banadir), causing the death of 7 people and injuries to other five;⁵⁸⁴ on 2 August 2024, when Al-Shabaab attacked the Beach View Hotel at Lido beach in Mogadishu, targeting ‘politicians, [security] forces and employees from various ministries and offices’,⁵⁸⁵ causing the death of nearly 100 people and over 280 casualties;⁵⁸⁶
- targeted killing, by shooting, of government officials, such as: on 26 November 2023, of a civilian working at the Ministry of Women and Human rights development in Mogadishu – Dharkenley;⁵⁸⁷ on 29 April 2024, of a government official working with the ministry of religious affairs in Mogadishu - Wadajir (Banadir);⁵⁸⁸ on 4 October 2024, of a government employee working for the Ministry of Agriculture inside his home in Mogadishu – Dharkenley;⁵⁸⁹ on 2, 20, and 23 February 2025, of government and district officials respectively in Bardheere (Gedo),⁵⁹⁰ Baidoa (Bay),⁵⁹¹ Belet Hawo (Gedo),⁵⁹² and in Baidoa again on 2 March 2025;⁵⁹³ on 8 March 2025, of the administrator of Ceel-Cadle village in Middle Shabelle, along with his security guards;⁵⁹⁴
- planting of IED: on 12 May 2024, overnight, Al-Shabaab targeted with IED the residential house of a former Information Minister of Southwest administration, and of the Deputy Ministry of Religion in Baidoa (Bay).⁵⁹⁵

District commissioners. Based on ACLED data, in the reference period, Al-Shabaab targeted district and deputy district commissioners, often at their residential houses or while travelling

⁵⁸¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49518

⁵⁸² BBC, Pearl Beach hotel: Islamists kill nine in Somalia attack, 10 June 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸³ France 24, Several killed, wounded in car bomb at Mogadishu cafe during Euro 2024 final, 15 July 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43446

⁵⁸⁵ The Guardian, At least 37 killed in terrorist attack on popular Mogadishu beach, 3 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁶ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 10

⁵⁸⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42873

⁵⁸⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44234

⁵⁸⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46722

⁵⁹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48821

⁵⁹¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49156

⁵⁹² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49157

⁵⁹³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49260

⁵⁹⁴ Baidoa Online, [X], posted on: 9 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44359



in convoys, by using suicide bombers, hand grenades, remotely controlled IED, or shooting. Most events took place in south-central Somalia, notably in Mogadishu (Benadir), Bay, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Gedo, Hiraan, and Lower Juba regions. ACLED kept track of 30 of such events resulting in at least 41 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁵⁹⁶

Tax collectors. Tax collectors formally or informally working for the state or the local government institutions have been targeted on several occasions in the reference period. ACLED kept track of 8 such events, which took place in south-central Somalia – notably Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Lower Juba – and involved victims shooting, but also abduction in one case. These attacks resulted in at least 7 estimated fatalities, 11 people injured and another unspecified number of casualties.⁵⁹⁷

1.6.2. Members of parliaments, clan and people representatives, electoral delegates

For specific background information on the rationale and the reasons behind the targeting of members of federal and state parliaments, clan elders and , as please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).⁵⁹⁸

Members of the Parliament. Current and former members of the Federal Parliament, as well as members of the various FMS parliaments, have been targeted by Al-Shabaab on several occasions in the reference period. ACLED kept track of 14 such events, which took place in south-central Somalia – notably Benadir, Bay, Hiraan, Lower Shabelle, Galgaduud, and Mudug – and involved mortar shells at residential places and hotels, roadside IED, and shooting. These events resulted in at least 13 estimated fatalities an unspecified number of casualties.⁵⁹⁹

Electoral delegates. Clan elders in their capacity as electoral delegates were targeted by Al-Shabaab on various occasions in the reference period. ACLED kept track of 10 of such events, with most instances taking place in south-central Somalia - notably Mogadishu (Benadir), Bay, and Lower Shabelle - and involving shooting of electoral delegates coming from various corners of the country. These events resulted in at least 7 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and 'district commissioner' and 'deputy commissioner' as keyword filter

⁵⁹⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), 'Al-Shabaab' as Actor 1, and 'tax' as search term, plus manual filtering

⁵⁹⁸ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 91, 96

⁵⁹⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'parliament', 'MP'

⁶⁰⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'delegate'



1.6.3. Military personnel, including army officials, FMS forces, clan elders and militia members

For specific background information on the rationale and the reasons behind the targeting of military and police personnel, at federal and state level, as well as clan elders and militias members, please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).⁶⁰¹

High-ranking military and police personnel. These profiles have been targeted – outside of the conflict – on various occasions during the reference period, including:

- on 14 July 2023, a suicide bomber targeted a residential neighbourhood in Mogadishu's Hodan district, targeting military officers and other government officials. At least eight individuals were killed, including colonel Abdikarin Ahmed Yusuf, known as Afar Shaagle, and military general Abdullahi Qaanso;⁶⁰²
- on 3 May 2024, Lieutenant Colonel Adan Omar Ahmed, known as 'Biid', was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Mogadishu near the Schola Polizia area in the heavily protected Xamarjajab district;⁶⁰³
- on 13 June 2024, Al-Shabaab shot and killed prominent police officer and head of CID (Criminal Investigation Department) in Mogadishu – Dharkenley, while off-duty;⁶⁰⁴

Military, police and security forces personnel. Soldiers, police officers, and security forces in general, including intelligence officials, have been targeted – outside of the conflict, while 'assumed off-duty' – on several occasions during the reference period. ACLED kept track of 21 of such events, with most instances taking place in South-Central Somalia - notably Mogadishu (Benadir), Bay, Bakool, Hiraan, Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle - and involving mostly shooting, but also IED and suicide bombers.⁶⁰⁵ Among other locations, Al-Shabaab targeted security officials, along with civilian by-standers, while they were frequenting teashops, restaurants, and *mira/khat* chewing or market points.⁶⁰⁶ Based on ACLED data during the reference period, 'teashops' were the location for this type of targeting in 21 cases across South-Central Somalia, resulting in 48 fatalities, including civilians, and a non-specified number of casualties.⁶⁰⁷ 'Restaurants' were the location for this type of targeting, notably in Benadir, in 16 occasions resulting in 73 fatalities, including civilians, and a non-specified number of casualties.⁶⁰⁸ *Khat/mira* 'chewing' or 'market points' were the location of such

⁶⁰¹ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 91-92

⁶⁰² Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab's coordinated attacks: Eight hit-and-run and bombing attacks across five regions, 15 July 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁰³ Somali Digest (The), Lt. Col. Adan Omar Ahmed Assassinated in Mogadishu, 3 May 2024, [url](#); UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 10

⁶⁰⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44887

⁶⁰⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'off-duty'

⁶⁰⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'off-duty', 'teashop', 'restaurant', 'Khat' or 'Mira'

⁶⁰⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'teashop' or 'tea shop'

⁶⁰⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'restaurant'



events, notably in South-Central Somalia, in 22 occasions, resulting in 26 fatalities and a non-specified number of casualties.⁶⁰⁹

Some illustrative examples include:⁶¹⁰

- attacks in teashops, cafés, restaurants, and *mira/khat* chewing points: on 13 July 2023, an IED planted by Al-Shabaab targeted government security forces (SNA) while resting and chewing *khat/mira* in Qalimow near Balcad (Middle Shabelle);⁶¹¹ on 23 January 2024, Puntland police officers – ‘assumed off duty’ - at a tea kiosk/*khat* chewing point in Tuurta area in Bosaso town were targeted by Al-Shabaab with an IED, resulting in the death of three police men and the injury of 10 others, including 2 civilians;⁶¹² on 17 August 2024, Al-Shabaab targeted a tea shop frequented by soldiers in Mogadishu, Daynile district (Benadir). Eight people, including two off-duty soldiers and the owner were killed, while six civilian bystanders were injured;⁶¹³ on 31 August 2024, at least three civilians were killed and 13 others injured, in a IED attack on a teashop in Bulu Burte where locals, Bulu Burte security forces and Macawisley clan militia tend to congregate;⁶¹⁴ on 17 October 2024, seven people died and six others were injured, both officers and civilians, after a suicide bomber detonated at a café outside a police training school in Mogadishu (Benadir);⁶¹⁵ on 2 December 2024, in a public restaurant in Afgooye (Lower Shabelle), where SNA soldiers often gather for coffee, an IED likely planted by Al-Shabaab killed a SNA soldier among other casualties and fatalities;⁶¹⁶ on 9 February 2025, Al-Shabaab targeted SNA soldiers off-duty with a planted IED in a teashop in Belet Weyne (Hiraan);⁶¹⁷
- attacks on *mira/khat* markets: on 9 September 2024, an IED planted by Al-Shabaab at the local *mira/khat* market in Hudur town (Bakool), injured five soldiers.⁶¹⁸

On other occasions, Al-Shabaab has resorted to targeted killing, by shooting, of security forces while off-duty, such as: on 17 July 2023, of a municipal police officer in front of his home in Mogadishu, Wadajir district (Benadir);⁶¹⁹ on 2 September 2023, of a Jubaland intelligence soldier in Bilis Qooqaani near Afmadow (Lower Juba);⁶²⁰ on 27 March 2024, of a government soldier (SNA) - assumed off duty - on his way home in Mogadishu - Wadajir (Banadir).⁶²¹

Clan elders. Clan elders were targeted by Al-Shabaab on various occasions in the reference period for supporting the government and its military operations, for mobilising militias against the group, or for unspecified reasons. In most cases they were shot and killed, in others either

⁶⁰⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword ‘khat/mira’

⁶¹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword ‘off-duty’ or ‘tea-shop’, or ‘khat/mira’ plus manual filtering, or other sources

⁶¹¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48217

⁶¹² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43478

⁶¹³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45449

⁶¹⁴ Kaab TV, IED Blast in Buloburde Teashop Kills 3, Injures 13 as Al-Shabaab Continues Siege, 1 September 2024, [url](#)

⁶¹⁵ AP, 7 killed in suicide bomber attack at a cafe in Somalia’s capital, 18 October 2024, [url](#)

⁶¹⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47300

⁶¹⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48919

⁶¹⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45659

⁶¹⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41733

⁶²⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48373

⁶²¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43985



attacked with explosive or abducted. ACLED kept track of at least 8 of such events, with most instances taking place in south-central Somalia, notably Mogadishu, Hiraan, Bay, and Lower Juba. These events resulted in at least 11 clan elders killed,⁶²² and another unspecified number (more than 8) abducted,⁶²³ including those murdered on occasion of the Qahira hotel attack in Beletweyne (Hiraan) on 11 March 2025.⁶²⁴ Additionally, overall more than 25 clan elders were abducted in relation to tax collection.⁶²⁵ For further details see [1.10 Individuals who have to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab or other groups and militias](#). On the targeting of clan elders as electoral delegates, see section above [1.6.2](#).

Clan and clan militia members. These profiles, when actively opposing Al-Shabaab, were targeted – outside the conflict – on various occasions during the reference period. Among others, ACLED kept track of following events:⁶²⁶

- Targeted killing, by shooting, of clan militia members and leaders: on 17 May 2023, of an Abgal clan militia member - off duty - in the Obasiiba area in Mogadishu - Wadajir (Banadir) who had been active in Middle Shabelle;⁶²⁷ on 23 May 2023, of a businessman from Abgal in Mogadishu - Dharkenley (Banadir), claiming that the victim was organising clan militia in Middle Shabelle;⁶²⁸ on 10 December 2023, Al-Shabaab shot and killed four civilians from Abgal Wacaysle clan in Oodley village near Ceel Dheer (Galgaduud) and abducted another two;⁶²⁹ on 18 December 2023, Al-Shabaab killed a civilian from Abgal clan in Mogadishu - Dharkenley (Banadir), accusing the victim of mobilising clan militias in Middle Shabelle region;⁶³⁰ on 27 March 2024, Al-Shabaab targeted an Abgal clan militia leader in the vicinity of Daaruu Nicma village, near Adan Yabaal (Middle Shabelle);⁶³¹ on 26 March 2024, Al-Shabaab killed a civilian from Baadiade clan in Shaw village (Jalalaqsi, Hiraan);⁶³² on 24 June 2024, Al-Shabaab killed a civilian in Ceel Buur (Galgaduud), a member of Habar Gedir clan militia;⁶³³ on 29 October 2023 and on 2 January 2024, Al-Shabaab targeted with hand-granades respectively a teashop and a meeting point frequented by Makane clan militia in Belet Weyne (Hiiraan);⁶³⁴ on 18 March 2025, overnight, Al-Shabaab shot the leader of the Makane clan militia at Budoweyne neighbourhood in Belet Weyne (Hiraan).⁶³⁵

⁶²² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'elder', and manual filtering

⁶²³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, and filter keyword 'elder', then 'abducted', SOM39916, SOM41665, SOM42690

⁶²⁴ The Washington Post, Somali forces end a 24-hour siege by al-Shabab militants on a hotel, leaving all fighters dead, 12 March 2025, [url](#); see also EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49393

⁶²⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41639, SOM42, SOM44949

⁶²⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filters, 'shot', then 'clan', and manual filtering

⁶²⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM40287

⁶²⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM40326

⁶²⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43040

⁶³⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43100

⁶³¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48724

⁶³² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43979

⁶³³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44977

⁶³⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42702, SOM43236

⁶³⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49418



1.6.4. Other individuals opposing or perceived as opposing Al-Shabaab

For specific background information on the rationale and the reasons behind the targeting of individuals opposing or perceived as opposing Al-Shabaab, please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).⁶³⁶

Businesspeople. In 2023, the Somali Government ordered all businesses in the main markets of Mogadishu to install CCTV cameras for security purposes.⁶³⁷ Al-Shabaab opposed the decision threatening to target anyone complying with the government's instructions.⁶³⁸ ACLED kept track of 26 of such events, which involved targeted killings and bombings, with instances taking place in various districts across Mogadishu (Benadir). These events resulted in at least 16 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁶³⁹ Businessmen were left facing two undesirable alternatives: while the government remained unable to protect them they were still liable to arrest if they did not comply.⁶⁴⁰

In general, in the reference period, businessmen and businesswomen have been subject to various attacks and forms of targeting, among others, for mobilising clan militia, for being affiliated with the government, or for unknown or unspecified reasons. ACLED kept track of 14 of such events, mostly shooting and killings, but also IED and hand grenades, with instances taking place in various regions across South-Central Somalia notably Benadir, but also Lower Shabelle, Gedo, and Bay. These events resulted in at least 30 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.⁶⁴¹ For other forms of targeting linked to other motives see relevant chapters including on [1.10. Individuals who have to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab or other groups and militias](#).

Spies. Civilians and businesspeople accused of spying for US forces, regional and federal security forces, regional and federal intelligence agencies, were targeted and executed on various occasions during the reference period. ACLED kept track of 18 of such events, mostly public executions, with instances taking place in various regions across South-Central Somalia, notably Middle Juba and mostly Jilib, but also in Lower Shabelle, Gedo, Lower Juba, Bay, and Bakool. These events resulted in at least 69 estimated fatalities.⁶⁴² On various occasions victims were also abducted in various locations across Somalia and then

⁶³⁶ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 92-96

⁶³⁷ ACLED, Al-Shabaab targets civilians in Somalia in retaliation for installing CCTV cameras, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

⁶³⁸ SMN, Al-Shabaab targets CCTV cameras at businesses doors in Mogadishu, 29 November 2023, [url](#); BBC, The city where shopkeepers fear their CCTV cameras could get them killed, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶³⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter 'CCTV'

⁶⁴⁰ Somali Digest, Mogadishu Government Warns Businesses Against CCTV Removals Despite Al-Shabab Attacks, 15 October 2024, [url](#); BBC, The city where shopkeepers fear their CCTV cameras could get them killed, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁴¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter 'business', minus 'CCTV' and manual filtering, SOM48091, SOM40326, SOM41642, SOM41854, SOM42023, SOM42292, SOM42572, SOM43105, SOM43452, SOM43611, SOM45511, SOM46714, SOM46958, SOM47197

⁶⁴² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter for 'spy', 'spies', 'covert agent', 'espionage'



transported to Jilib (Middle Juba), including from Puntland and Mogadishu,⁶⁴³ from Jamame (Lower Juba),⁶⁴⁴ and from Jilib itself (Middle Juba).⁶⁴⁵

Humanitarian workers. Most international NGOs are not allowed to operate in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab,⁶⁴⁶ however some do so depending on their own policies, and after being vetted by the militant group, whose main concern remains preventing spying and intelligence gathering.⁶⁴⁷ Once received clearance, these organisations can carry out humanitarian work provided that Al-Shabaab rules and procedures are fully respected, including taxation of projects' outputs, deliverables, and activities. Among other rules, for instance, the use of mobile phones is not allowed. In some cases, international organisations find a viable approach to navigate this environment. For instance, the ICRC operates in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab but without showing its 'red cross' symbol. The UN organisations and agencies instead, being associated with the FGS, rely on international and local NGOs, as well as contractors, in order to operate.⁶⁴⁸

The same type of vetting mentioned above applies as well to Somali and local NGOs or CSOs.⁶⁴⁹ More in general, people in south-central Somalia, outside of Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, are able to join local CSOs with different specialisations.⁶⁵⁰

According to the Aid Worker Security Database, in Somalia 9 aid personnel were killed in 2024 and 5 in 2023, 2 were kidnapped in 2024 and 10 in 2023, 7 were wounded in 2024 and 11 in 2023.⁶⁵¹ According to UNOCHA, 5 humanitarian staff were killed, 8 kidnapped, and 16 injured in the course of 2024.⁶⁵² However, UNOCHA indicates that, while violence against humanitarian personnel, assets, and facilities significantly increased in 2024 compared to the previous year – with 47 reported incidents in 2023 and 67 in 2024 – the killing of aid workers is not linked to their status but rather collateral to hostilities.⁶⁵³

Within this context, in the reference period of this report, ACLED kept track of the following incidents involving Al-Shabaab on the one hand and humanitarian/aid workers on the other:

- on 7 June 2023, Al-Shabaab abducted five medical workers and six civilians on a road between Farlibaax village and Belet Weyne (Hiraan);⁶⁵⁴
- on 24 June 2023, Al-Shabaab abducted two local NGO workers near Bansoole village (Buur Hakaba, Bay);⁶⁵⁵
- on 4 April 2024, Al-Shabaab targeted with a planted IED the convoy of the Verenel Association, a Turkish aid agency, while passing in Garasbaaley area in Mogadishu -

⁶⁴³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43511

⁶⁴⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44778, SOM44809

⁶⁴⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49295

⁶⁴⁶ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 24

⁶⁴⁷ International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview 31 March 2025

⁶⁴⁸ International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview 31 March 2025

⁶⁴⁹ International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview 31 March 2025

⁶⁵⁰ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 24

⁶⁵¹ AWSO, Major attacks in 2024 – Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵² UNOCHA, Somalia – Humanitarian Access Snapshot – January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁵³ UNOCHA, Somalia – Humanitarian Access Snapshot – January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2

⁶⁵⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48151

⁶⁵⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41552



Daynile (Benadir), causing the death of two aid workers including a Turkish national, and injuries to seven others;⁶⁵⁶

- on 1 June 2024, overnight, an IED planted by Al-Shabaab targeted the premises of a local NGO renting from the Southwest Minister of Water and Energy, in Baidoa (Bay),⁶⁵⁷
- on 21 June 2024, Al-Shabaab abducted the Head of Somali Red Crescent Office near Luuqjelow village, Beletweyne (Hiraan).⁶⁵⁸

According to humanitarian groups, 'Al-Shabaab typically harasses secular and faith-based humanitarian aid organisations, threatening the lives of their personnel and accusing them of seeking to convert individuals to Christianity'.⁶⁵⁹ For more information about civilians abducted in the context of humanitarian operations see section below.

Civilians. In the reference period Al-Shabaab abducted numerous civilians on various grounds, such as for collaborating with the government security forces or for refusing to collaborate with the group, for seeking or facilitating humanitarian assistance in the local context beyond the group's control, for breaching the groups' rules, as well as for other reasons, including unknown or unspecified motives. Victims were often taken to Jilib. In the reference period, ACLED kept track of 50 such incidents, which resulted in at least 180 individuals abducted, excluding profiles already addressed elsewhere in the report.⁶⁶⁰ Some illustrative examples include:

- abductions linked to trade and commercial vehicles: on 31 May 2023, ten civilian commercial drivers along with their vehicles on the road between Balcad and Jowhar (Middle Shabelle);⁶⁶¹ on 7 February 2024, an unknown number of civilians in the periphery of the Kismayo along with eleven vehicles carrying milk;⁶⁶² on 1 March 2025, two civilians in the vicinity of Yaaq Shinile village near Kismayo (Lower Juba), who were accused of transporting multiple bags of charcoal;⁶⁶³ within this context, trade that might be beneficial of government controlled areas can be further taxed, sanctioned, or prevented;⁶⁶⁴
- abductions linked to lack of cooperation with or opposition to the group: on 30 May 2024, four civilians in Balad-ul-Amin village, near Jamaame (Lower Juba), accused of collaborating with government security forces;⁶⁶⁵ on 3 June 2024, two civilians accused of working with Jubaland security forces in Jamaame (Lower Juba);⁶⁶⁶ on 20 October 2024, three civilians near Jana Cabdalle, Afmadow (Lower Juba), because of their lack of

⁶⁵⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44061

⁶⁵⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44789

⁶⁵⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44948

⁶⁵⁹ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁶⁶⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, filter keyword 'abducted', and manual filtering, without counting elders, aid workers, khat/mira dealers, thieves, tax collectors, spies and other profiles already addressed elsewhere in the report.

⁶⁶¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48145

⁶⁶² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43546

⁶⁶³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49147

⁶⁶⁴ Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia's Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 22

⁶⁶⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44778

⁶⁶⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44809



- cooperation with the group;⁶⁶⁷ on 4 November 2024, two civilians suspected to be affiliated with Jubaland security forces in Beerhani, near Kismaayo (Lower Juba);⁶⁶⁸
- abductions linked to control over humanitarian operations: on 3 October 2023, around forty civilians accused of traveling to Diinsoor to receive humanitarian assistance in the vicinity of Gurbaan village (Diinsoor, Bay);⁶⁶⁹ on 10 January 2024, 6 civilians in Xaabow village, near Ceel Buur (Galgaduud), after a UNSOS contracted helicopter carrying personnel and medical supplies made an emergency landing in the Al-Shabaab-controlled area;⁶⁷⁰ on 13 February 2025, the Wadajir district officer and camp leader, who was also killed, near Dhobley, Afmadow (Lower Juba), while the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) was distributing NFI and hygiene kits within the camp;⁶⁷¹
 - abductions linked to other reasons, including religious aspects, land tenure rights, and unknown or unspecified reasons (notably of children): on 7 June 2024, more than 30 Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa and quranic teachers members in Laantabuur village near Afgooye (Lower Shabelle);⁶⁷² on 25 August 2024, eight civilians from Marehan and Bartire clans in Saakow (Middle Juba) after crossing to the grazing land of the Auliyen clan;⁶⁷³ children, for unknown or unspecified reasons, notably in Galgaduud, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, and Lower Juba.⁶⁷⁴

1.7. Journalists

As of September 2024, the situation of media freedom in Somalia was described as remaining ‘deeply concerning’, with journalists continuing being exposed to harassment and threats both from the Somali government and Al-Shabaab.⁶⁷⁵ Freedom of the media, ‘including all forms of electronic and web-based media’ is stipulated in Article 18 of Somalia’s Provisional Constitution.⁶⁷⁶ However, journalists were harassed, facing arbitrary detention, suspension, fines, and violence⁶⁷⁷ from both state actors,⁶⁷⁸ including law enforcement and intelligence

⁶⁶⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM46844

⁶⁶⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47031

⁶⁶⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42414

⁶⁷⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43378

⁶⁷¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48979

⁶⁷² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44841

⁶⁷³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45536

⁶⁷⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48164, SOM41867, SOM41868, SOM42211, SOM42919, SOM43396, SOM44959, SOM45426, SOM47283, SOM48991

⁶⁷⁵ IPI, Somalia: Impunity for crimes against journalists must end, 23 September 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁷⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024, Somalia, 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 31; NUSOJ, NUSOJ Demands Urgent Action to Defend Journalists and Uphold Media Freedom on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, [url](#); CPJ, Haiti, Israel most likely to let journalists’ murders go unpunished, CPJ 2024 impunity index shows, 30 October 2024, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in Somalia, 27 September 2024, [S/2024/698], [url](#), para. 55, 88

⁶⁷⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024, Somalia, 2024, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in Somalia, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 55, 88



officials,⁶⁷⁹ and non-state actors,⁶⁸⁰ both in 2023 and 2024,⁶⁸¹ while for 2024 the conflict with Al-Shabaab was described as ‘remain[ing] dangerous and even deadly’ for journalists.⁶⁸²

The United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia reported ongoing and persistent violations to the rights of journalists and media workers for the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, which were obstructing freedom of expression and leading to self-censorship and misinformation,⁶⁸³ with protection of the rights of freedom of opinion and expression being of ‘major concern’.⁶⁸⁴

According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), in Somalia, journalists have been facing long-standing issues linked to their freedom and safety, regularly facing legal restrictions that obstruct their work, with physical safety being a ‘constant concern due to threats and violence’⁶⁸⁵ as well as ‘systemic impunity’.⁶⁸⁶

Legal framework and implementation. On the topic of protection of journalists and of freedom of expression, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern linked to numerous reports of severe restrictions on the freedoms of opinion and expression, including due to a legal framework, that permits for limitations if activities are deemed to be contrary to Islam, public safety, public order or stability.⁶⁸⁷ For instance, both the UN Independent Expert on the human rights situation in Somalia and NUSOJ made reference to the Penal Code, with the former highlighting the ‘persistent practice’ of making reference to the Penal Code to censor, punish and prosecute journalists, while NUSOJ added that the Code ‘poses significant threats to journalists and media freedom due to its vague and broadly defined provisions’, with different articles used to criminalise journalists’ activities.⁶⁸⁸ It has to be noted that, in Somalia’s Penal Code of 1962, there is no direct mention of journalists.⁶⁸⁹

The 2016 Media Law and the 2020 amendments were described as not sufficiently safeguarding and even limiting freedom of expression.⁶⁹⁰ The Official Information Bill, which has been approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2024 and which is pending Federal Parliament approval,⁶⁹¹ ‘has been widely condemned’ as potentially limiting the public’s right

⁶⁷⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, 27 September 2024, [S/2024/698], [url](#), para. 55, 88

⁶⁸⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024, Somalia, 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸¹ HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#); HRW, Somalia Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸² CPJ, Haiti, Israel most likely to let journalists’ murders go unpunished, CPJ 2024 impunity index shows, 30 October 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 92

⁶⁸⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 31

⁶⁸⁵ NUSOJ, Solidarity for the Rights of Journalists and Access to Information Right – Marking International Human Rights Day, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁶ NUSOJ, NUSOJ Demands Urgent Action to Defend Journalists and Uphold Media Freedom on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, 6 May 2024, [url](#), para. 37

⁶⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 33; NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁸⁹ Somalia, Penal Code, Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962, 1962, available at: [url](#)

⁶⁹⁰ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6; UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, 6 May 2024, [url](#), para. 37

⁶⁹¹ IFJ, Access to Information: “No to secrets” urge journalists around the world, 27 September 2024, [url](#)



to information and obstructing journalists from fulfilling their ‘watchdog role’.⁶⁹² Several organisations requested the withdrawal of the Official Information Bill allowing for a detailed review.⁶⁹³

In March 2024, the new Somali Media Council was appointed.⁶⁹⁴ While described as a positive development and an ‘effort to enhance media landscape’,⁶⁹⁵ concerns were raised that the process was not in accordance with the media law;⁶⁹⁶ media organisations were not involved,⁶⁹⁷ and it consisted mainly of government ‘allies’ rather than media representatives⁶⁹⁸ and raised concerns of increased state control over the media, and of negative impact on media and journalists critical of the government.⁶⁹⁹

Throughout 2023, USDOS reported that in Somaliland, regulations in place banned the publication or circulation of news considered ‘exaggerated or incitive and having the potential to disrupt public order’, with the authorities using these regulations to detain and press charges against journalists.⁷⁰⁰

1.7.1. Journalists’ main syndicates, protection and remedies

There is a significant number of professional associations and trade unions that represent the interests of journalists in Somalia.⁷⁰¹ Some indicative examples include the Federation of Somali Journalists (FESoj), which is a national union of professional journalists in Somalia, with headquarters in Mogadishu and with a mandate to monitor, investigate and report violations of press freedom and human rights of journalists.⁷⁰² Another organisation is the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), founded in 2002 as an association called Somali Journalists Network (SOJON) with the aim to promote and protect freedom of the press and the interests of journalists.⁷⁰³ NUSOJ monitors, investigates and provides information on violations of media freedom and journalists’ human rights. It also organises national solidarity actions with journalists who have been targeted.⁷⁰⁴ The Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) is described as an independent trade union of journalists that aims to protect their human rights.⁷⁰⁵ The SJS provides legal support to journalists in legal proceedings, as well as advocacy for legal reform.⁷⁰⁶ There are also women’s journalist associations, such as the

⁶⁹² NUSOJ, NUSOJ Demands Urgent Action to Defend Journalists and Uphold Media Freedom on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹³ IFJ, Somalia: Official Information Bill endangers the right to access information, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ IFJ, Somalia: Unlawful appointment of Media Council threatens press freedom, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ UNSOM, End of mission statement by Ms. Isha Dyfan, Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia on her third country visit, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁶ UNSOM, End of mission statement by Ms. Isha Dyfan, Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia on her third country visit, 9 May 2024, [url](#); IFJ, Somalia: Unlawful appointment of Media Council threatens press freedom, 18 March 2024, [url](#); RSF, Somalia appoints Media Council consisting mainly of government allies and only one journalist, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹⁷ IFJ, Somalia: Unlawful appointment of Media Council threatens press freedom, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁸ RSF, Somalia appoints Media Council consisting mainly of government allies and only one journalist, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ IFJ, Somalia: Unlawful appointment of Media Council threatens press freedom, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁰ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 18

⁷⁰¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 35

⁷⁰² FESoj, What we do, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰³ NUSOJ, About NUSOJ, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰⁴ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 15

⁷⁰⁵ SJS, About SJS, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰⁶ SJS, SJS Annual Report 2023 – State of Press Freedom in Somalia, 8 March 2024, [url](#), p. 25



Somali Women Journalists Rights Association (SOWJRA)⁷⁰⁷ and the Somali Media Women Association.⁷⁰⁸

In September 2020, a special prosecutor for crimes against journalists in Somalia was appointed by Somalia's Attorney General, with a mandate to investigate and apprehend individuals who were involved in the killings and harassment against journalists.⁷⁰⁹ In September 2024, the International Press Institute (IPI) reiterated the request they had shared together with the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) for accountability for the killings of journalists dating back to 2016 and highlighted that according to their research there had been no progress in these cases or any prosecutions.⁷¹⁰

Following the Consultative Forum on the Safety and Security of Journalists held in Mogadishu in September 2022 organised by the National Union for Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), journalists in Somalia developed and adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Safety of Journalists in Somalia, with the aim to create a safe working environment for journalists and address 'impunity' against journalists.⁷¹¹ The NAP is implemented at a federal level and is a multi-stakeholder initiative supported by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), different media houses, the Federal Government, UNESCO and the International Labor Organisation.⁷¹² No additional information on the implementation of the NAP could be found.

1.7.2. Treatment and targeting

Somalia was ranked second and third respectively in the 2023 and 2024 Global Impunity Index of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an index rating countries based on measuring unsolved killings in proportion to a country's population.⁷¹³

In March 2025, the SJS reported the increasing targeting of journalists covering security issues in Mogadishu, following an announcement by the government banning coverage of Al-Shabaab threats in the capital. Nineteen journalists covering an Al-Shabaab attack against the President's convoy on 18 March were briefly arrested, transported to a police station where the police confiscated their equipment and deleted their footage and photos, and then released.⁷¹⁴ The Somali Media Association (SOMA) reported that, on 18 March 2025, the police raided and shut down Risaala Media Corporation's station in Mogadishu and arrested and detained five journalists. This media outlet was the first to publish news of the Al-Shabaab

⁷⁰⁷ SOWJRA, Somali Women Journalists Rights Association, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰⁸ Somali Media Women Association, About Us, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ FESQJ, Somalia's Attorney General Appoints Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Journalists in Somalia, 9 September 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ IPI, Somalia: Impunity for crimes against journalists must end, 23 September 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ NUSOJ, National Action Plan (NAP) for the Safety of Journalists in Somalia, n.d., [url](#), p. 3; ATMIS, Somalia journalists adopt a National Action Plan to strengthen work safety and security, 6 September 2022, [url](#)

⁷¹² UNESCO, National Safety Mechanisms – Somalia, n.d., [url](#)

⁷¹³ CPJ, Haiti joins list of countries where killers of journalists most likely to go unpunished, 31 October 2023, [url](#); CPJ, CPJ 2024 Impunity Index: Haiti and Israel top list of countries where journalist murders go unpunished, 30 October 2024, [url](#); CPJ, Haiti, Israel most likely to let journalists' murders go unpunished, CPJ 2024 impunity index shows, 30 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ SJS, In a new crackdown on free press, Somali police arrest 19 journalists reporting on Al-Shabaab attack on president's convoy, 19 March 2025, [url](#)



attack against the President's convoy.⁷¹⁵ One week earlier, the Minister of Information Daud Aweis had made threats of "legal action and severe punishment" against journalists and media outlets that were reporting on 'security failures' in Mogadishu while Al-Shabaab attacks were increasing in and around the capital.⁷¹⁶

In a statement to the UN Human Rights Council in October 2023, the Secretary General of NUSOJ highlighted the 'concerning frequency of attacks on journalists' and reported for 2023 an increase 'in sophisticated threats and intimidation, leading to widespread self-censorship' towards journalists and news media organizations, in almost all of Somalia.⁷¹⁷ In addition, according to the NUSOJ annual report for 2023, throughout 2023, attacks against journalists presented some trends described as 'alarming'; most cases demonstrated a prevalence of 'intimidation tactics', while approximately 17 % of the attacks were of detention without immediate release, and 17 % were instances of torture.⁷¹⁸ For the period from February to June 2023 a 76 % increase in arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists was reported.⁷¹⁹ Similarly, the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law⁷²⁰ reported, as of September 2024, an increase in the targeting of journalists in Somaliland and Puntland.⁷²¹

For 2023, the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) reported an increasing use of Facebook's Community Standards and mass reporting, aiming to 'censor Somali journalists critical of the government', which resulted in content removal, restriction to freedom of expression and deletion of accounts.⁷²²

Regional treatment and targeting. A trend of limiting civil liberties in Somaliland, including through an increasing number of arrests of journalists was reported.⁷²³ For 2024 and 2023, arrests in Somaliland of journalists by the authorities were related.⁷²⁴ Puntland, together with Somaliland and the Southwest, was described as an area where in 2023 media freedom was 'significantly undermined', with political actions resulting in self-censorship of journalists and in editorial interference, notably during the Puntland elections. Journalists and media houses in Puntland faced both internal and external pressures, including interference, intimidation and pressure, affecting their ability to report in an accurate and independent way.⁷²⁵ Journalists additionally noted instances of media houses receiving communication from political figures to either change or omit reporting critically towards certain political forces in exchange for a

⁷¹⁵ SOMA, Somali police shut down an independent Radio and TV station and arrested journalists after reporting on the bombing attack on the president's convoy in Mogadishu, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁶ SJS, In a new crackdown on free press, Somali police arrest 19 journalists reporting on Al-Shabaab attack on president's convoy, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁷ NUSOJ, UN Human Rights Council – Statement Delivered by NUSOJ on the frequency of attacks on journalists and the restrictions on freedom of expression in Somalia, 10 October 2023, [url](#)

⁷¹⁸ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁷¹⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, 15 June 2023, [S/2023/443], [url](#), para. 96

⁷²⁰ The International Center for Not-For-Profit Law aims to improve the legal environment for civil society, philanthropy, and public participation around the world, was founded in 1992. Source: ICNL, About Us, n.d., [url](#)

⁷²¹ ICNL, Somalia, 6 September 2024, [url](#)

⁷²² SJS, SJS Annual Report 2023 – State of Press Freedom in Somalia, 8 March 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁷²³ International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷²⁴ HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#); CPJ, Journalist Bushaaro Ali Mohamed detained in Somaliland, 23 May 2023, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

bribe or by being intimidated.⁷²⁶ On the internal pressures, journalists reported that media house managers or owners, due to political pressure, instructed their newsrooms to cover in a positive way certain candidates, with stories being amended or entirely suppressed if they did not align with a positive narrative.⁷²⁷

Actors. According to NUSOJ, the main perpetrator of attacks against journalists in 2023 was the police, with nearly 87 % of attacks against journalists being attributed to them, while approximately 9 % of the attacks were attributed to NISA.⁷²⁸ Reporters Without Borders (RSF) noted that Al-Shabaab was ‘primarily responsible for the killing of journalists’, with those who do not self-censor being more likely to be targeted, arrested and arbitrarily detained.⁷²⁹ USDOS, citing local sources, noted that harassment towards journalists was perpetrated by state security forces in Somaliland, Puntland, South West State, Galmudug, Jubaland, government-aligned militias, clan and other private groups, and al-Shabaab.⁷³⁰

Data. In the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025, the Somali Journalists Syndicate reported 206 incidents against journalists, with the main type being detention, followed by arrests, threats and intimidation, denied access and physical assaults.⁷³¹ Most of the reported incidents took place in the Benadir region, more specifically close to Mogadishu (129), followed by Somaliland, in proximity to Hargeisa (39).⁷³² On 18 March 2025, one journalist was among those killed in a bomb attack by Al-Shabaab against the convoy of Somalia’s President in Mogadishu, making him the first reported journalist killed in 2025.⁷³³ While the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and NUSOJ reported no fatalities of journalists for 2024,⁷³⁴ the International Federation of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists reported fatalities of journalists in 2024.⁷³⁵ For 2024 NUSOJ documented 52 cases of attacks against journalists, including physical assaults, arbitrary arrests, online and offline harassment, and sexual and gender-based violence targeting female journalists, while media houses were also attacked.⁷³⁶ ACLED, in the period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, reported six incidents related to journalists; in three of these incidents journalists appeared to be specifically targeted.⁷³⁷ For indicative illustrative incidents, see the paragraph below on **Illustrative incidents**.

SGBV against female journalists. In its October 2023 statement to the UN Human Rights Council, NUSOJ highlighted the increasing incidents of gender-based violence against female journalists, as well as the absence of appropriate legal mechanisms to address and combat

⁷²⁶ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 10

⁷²⁷ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁷²⁸ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁷²⁹ RSF, Somalia, n.d., [url](#)

⁷³⁰ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 19

⁷³¹ SJS, Database Violations Against Journalists, Filter Date Range From: 01-03-2023 To: 31-03-2025, [url](#)

⁷³² SJS, Database Violations Against Journalists, Filter Date Range From: 01-03-2023 To: 31-03-2025, [url](#)

⁷³³ IFJ, Somalia: Journalist killed in Al-Shabaab bomb attack in Mogadishu, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁴ CPJ, 2024 is deadliest year for journalists in CPJ history; almost 70% killed by Israel, 12 February 2025, [url](#); NUSOJ, NUSOJ Demands Urgent Action to Defend Journalists and Uphold Media Freedom on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁵ IFJ, 2024 Killed List, 3 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 17-18; NUJ, Somalia: journalist killed in newsroom, 14 March 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁶ NUSOJ, NUSOJ Demands Urgent Action to Defend Journalists and Uphold Media Freedom on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

these crimes.⁷³⁸ Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against female journalists was described as a ‘a grave issue in Somalia’, significantly impacting media freedom, documenting 31 cases of sexual violence and harassment against female journalists in 2023.⁷³⁹ According to the Saferworld organisation, female journalists in Somalia face high levels of insecurity. They are targeted due to their work on issues that are perceived as ‘controversial’ and as disruptive to traditional gender norms.⁷⁴⁰

Illustrative incidents. During the reference period, there were numerous incidents of arrests, detainment and in some cases imprisonment of journalists.⁷⁴¹ On 17 December 2024, female journalist Shukri Aabi Abdi was assaulted by NISA plainclothes officers at Mogadishu’s Daljirka Dahsoon, while reporting on the Mogadishu protest.⁷⁴² On 18 October 2024, the award-winning Somali-Swedish journalist Amun Abdullahi Mohamed was killed by two gunmen with reported ties to Al-Shabaab. Mohamed was a prominent journalist, known for exposing extremism and the activities of Al-Shabaab through her investigative reporting.⁷⁴³ On 18 August 2024, Somali police at Mogadishu’s Hawlwadaag police station briefly detained seven local journalists who were at Bakaro market to cover a strike by local business owners against new taxes and other fees. The journalists were told that police officers would give a press conference; as soon as they arrived at the police station, they were detained. They were released but warned against reporting on this topic.⁷⁴⁴

Between May and September 2024, five journalists were arrested and detained by the authorities, for reporting and commenting on matters of public interest. Out of the five journalists reported as arrested and detained by the authorities in the period from 24 May to 20 September 2024, two incidents took place in Somaliland and one each in Jubbaland, Puntland, Galmudug and Mogadishu.⁷⁴⁵

In May 2024, in Mogadishu, the government froze the accounts of the Somali Journalists Syndicate announcing criminal charges against the organisation and its leadership whose staff members had previously been repeatedly detained.⁷⁴⁶

NUSOJ reported on the ongoing mistreatment of journalists from MM Somali TV, who were raided, assaulted, had their equipment destroyed and confiscated, and were subsequently

⁷³⁸ NUSOJ, UN Human Rights Council – Statement Delivered by NUSOJ on the frequency of attacks on journalists and the restrictions on freedom of expression in Somalia, 10 October 2023, [url](#)

⁷³⁹ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁴⁰ Saferworld, Addressing gender-based violence against women activists in Somalia: Violence Observatory Systems, November 2023, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁴¹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 54; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 32; HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#);

⁷⁴² NUSOJ, Female Journalist Brutally Assaulted by NISA Officers, Suffers Serious Injuries While Reporting on Mogadishu Protest, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁴³ IFJ, 2024 Killed List, 3 March 2025, [url](#), p. 25; IPI, Africa Media Monitoring October 2024: Threats to press freedom in DRC, Somalia, and Mozambique, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁴ SJS, Wave of violence and intimidation targeted journalists covering Mogadishu protests, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁵ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 55

⁷⁴⁶ HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UNCAC Coalition, UNCAC Coalition expresses concern regarding judicial action against Somali Journalists Syndicate, 17 May 2024, [url](#)



detained by Somaliland security forces on 6 January 2024.⁷⁴⁷ In the period between 6 and 14 January 2024, two journalists, two studio employees and one social media activist in Somaliland were reported to have been arbitrarily detained by the Somaliland Intelligence Agency allegedly for remarking on the memorandum of understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Three were released and not charged, while the other two continued being detailed without charges.⁷⁴⁸

On 16 April 2023, four journalists were arrested and detained in Mogadishu for trying to report on an explosion. On 18 March 2023, five male journalists in Somaliland were arrested and detained as they were conducting interviews on the alleged corruption of a government official. In both cases, the police released all the journalists on the same day without charges.⁷⁴⁹

Somali Cable Television's director Abdifatah Moalim Nur was killed in a suicide bomb attack on 16 October 2023 at the Blue-Sky restaurant in Mogadishu, allegedly by Al-Shabaab.⁷⁵⁰ According to NUSOJ, the restaurant was a well-known gathering place for journalists, with the attack raising 'serious concerns about the deliberate targeting of media professionals'.⁷⁵¹ On 6 October 2023, a television journalist was killed by a suicide bomber using an improvised explosive device in a restaurant in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab took responsibility for the attack, stating that the target was "Somali security officials".⁷⁵²

1.7.3. Situation in Al-Shabaab controlled areas

According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2024, covering the period from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2023, in areas controlled by al-Shabaab, association and assembly rights were severely restricted. The source added that Al-Shabaab did not permit any independent journalism in areas under its control, and that in case journalists were allowed access, they were closely monitored by Al-Shabaab.⁷⁵³ USDOS reported that Al-Shabaab also engaged in violence and harassment of journalists, while many journalists were killed or injured in what was described as indiscriminate attacks by Al-Shabaab, while also banning journalists from reporting news not in line with their ideology.⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁴⁷ NUSOJ, Appalling Torture and Illegal Detention of Journalists in Somaliland Strangles Independent Journalism, 9 January 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁸ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 53

⁷⁴⁹ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 71

⁷⁵⁰ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6; BBC, Somali Cable Television's director Nur killed in suicide blast, 17 October 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ NUSOJ, State of the Media report 2023, November 2024, [url](#), p. 10

⁷⁵² UN Security Council, Situation in Somalia, 2 February 2024, [S/2024/129], [url](#), para. 52

⁷⁵³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 14

⁷⁵⁴ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 20



1.8. LGBTIQ+

1.8.1. Legal framework

In Somalia, including Somaliland and Puntland, same-sex relationships are illegal.⁷⁵⁵ Somalia's Provisional Constitution, adopted in 2012, confirms in Article 2 that Islam is the state religion and that 'No law can be enacted that is not compliant with the general principles and objectives of Shari'ah'.⁷⁵⁶ Similar provisions exist in the constitutions of Somaliland (Article 5(2))⁷⁵⁷ and Puntland (Article 9(4)).⁷⁵⁸ Most Islamic scholars consider homosexuality as unlawful sexual intercourse which is called 'zina' in Islam.⁷⁵⁹ Homosexual acts can be punished by death by stoning or flogging.⁷⁶⁰ For more details see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles](#), Chapter 8.⁷⁶¹

The Somali Penal Code, that was enacted in 1962 and entered into force in 1964, is the basis for criminal law across the whole area, including Somaliland, Puntland and south-central Somalia. It states that homosexuality is illegal.⁷⁶² Article 409 of the Penal Code provides: 'Whoever has carnal intercourse with a person of the same sex shall be punished, where the act does not constitute a more serious crime, with imprisonment from three months to three years. Where the act committed is an act of lust different from carnal intercourse, the punishment imposed shall be reduced by one-third.'⁷⁶³ The last sentence refers to lesbians.⁷⁶⁴ Article 410 provides a security measure that can be applied to crimes that violate Article 409 of the Penal Code. This allows police surveillance to be carried out in order to prevent re-offending.⁷⁶⁵ The Somali constitution deals with the topic 'equality' in Article 11(3), that reads: 'The State must not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, race, colour, tribe, ethnicity, culture, dialect, gender, birth, disability, religion, political opinion, occupation, or wealth'.⁷⁶⁶ Statutory laws in Somalia do not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There are no '[h]ate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms [...] to

⁷⁵⁵ Week (The), The countries where being gay is still illegal, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Human Dignity Trust, Map of Jurisdictions that Criminalise LGBT People, 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁶ Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁷ Somaliland, The Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland, 2001, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁸ Puntland, Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland ee Soomaaliya [Constitution of the Puntland State of Somalia] 2009, amended 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁹ Unites States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Factsheet: Shari'a and LGBTQ Persons, March 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁶⁰ ILGA World, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update, 15 December 2020, [url](#), p. 37

⁷⁶¹ ILGA World, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update, 15 December 2020, [url](#), p. 37

⁷⁶² Horizon Institute, Discussion Paper on Reform of the Somaliland Penal Code, December 2014, [url](#), pp. 1, 18; Puntland Post: The arbitrary application of the Somali Penal Code against Puntland elders is unacceptable, 25 April 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ FIS, Somalia / Seksuaali- ja sukupuoliyhteisyyden asema Somaliassa, päivitys Somalia [Status of sexual and gender minorities in Somalia, update], 24 February 2021, [url](#), p. 3, footnote n. 10

⁷⁶⁴ SIDA, The Rights of LGBTI People in Somalia, November 2014, [url](#), p. 1; see also Arc-en-Ciel International rainbow, LGBTQIA+ Life Challenges in Somalia, 2023, [url](#); Equaldex, LGBT Rights in Somalia, n.a., [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ SIDA, The Rights of LGBTI People in Somalia, November 2014, [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁶⁶ Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 2012, [url](#)



aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBTQI+ community.⁷⁶⁷

It is unclear to which degree the provisions of the Somali Penal Code are enforced in south-central Somalia. Based on anecdotal knowledge, Somalia expert Hoehne indicated that, occasionally, in the course of 2023 and 2024, Somali police has intensified anti-gay operations investigating suspects in the capital.⁷⁶⁸ Although the death penalty for homosexuality is not possible under Somali criminal law, a strict interpretation of Sharia law can legitimise its use.⁷⁶⁹ In Somaliland, same-sex relationships are penalised and the law is enforced. In March 2023 '40 persons were being held on charges of homosexuality; four persons were sentenced to eight years imprisonment, while the remainder awaited charges or had been released by year's end.'⁷⁷⁰

1.8.2. Societal attitude and treatment by the state

Somalia is a Muslim nation. Almost 100 percent of the Somali population is Sunni Muslim.⁷⁷¹ This is relevant regarding gay life in Somalia, because according to fundamental Islamic provisions, homosexuality is considered a sin and incurs the strongest condemnation of all prohibited forms of sexuality.⁷⁷²

According to Somalia expert Hoehne, everyday life of LGBTQI+ is characterised by constant hiding. Society does not tolerate homosexuality or any form of sexuality deviating from the heterosexual norm. Homosexuality, transgender and the like are considered an 'illness'. People do not believe that a person is born that way but that the 'deviant' sexual orientation is acquired and contagious. Parents would try to 'cure' their children, if necessary by force. If a person is suspected of violating the heterosexual norms firmly in place in Somalia - backed by Islam - his/her own family will start exercising pressure. First, deviant children are beaten or otherwise abused at home. Second, they can be incarcerated in houses called '*dhaqan celis*' - 'return to culture' - on behalf of their parents. '*Dhaqan celis*' are privately owned 'correction facilities' which are guarded. Inmates are chained and cannot leave. 'Treatment' consists of reading the Koran to them. In those houses, which are gender-segregated, boys or girls frequently suffer abuse, including beating, starvation and rape. Persons considered 'gay' or 'trans' - in Somali, the term '*khaniis*' is used for all LGBTQI+ persons - are not taken seriously. If they complain about abuse, neither parents nor authorities would receive the claim. If 'treatment' does not work, families can decide to have their LGBTQI+ members killed. Even parents may order someone to assassinate them.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁷ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 45

⁷⁶⁸ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁷⁶⁹ ILGA World, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update, 15 December 2020, [url](#), p. 76

⁷⁷⁰ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 45

⁷⁷¹ USDOS, Somalia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report, 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷² Hunt, S. L.; et al., Somali American Female Refugees Discuss Their Attitudes toward Homosexuality and the Gay and Lesbian Community, 2018, [url](#), p. 2; FIS, Somalia / Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen asema Somaliassa, päivitys Somalia [Status of sexual and gender minorities in Somalia, update], 24 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁷³ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; see also BBC, 'Don't come back, they'll kill you for being gay', 28 July 2020, [url](#); Independent (The), Young Somali activist sentenced to death for being a lesbian, 31 January 2016, [url](#)



LGBTQI+ persons face stigmatisation.⁷⁷⁴ Still according to Somalia expert Hoehne, gay men, for instance, are not considered men by their own parents and are excluded from learning gender-specific skills. They are also excluded from inheritance. If a person is suspected of being LGBTQI+, this person will face harassment and exclusion. Somalis wearing gender-nonconforming clothing may be harassed in public. Those who cannot flee Somalia are forced to conform to heterosexual norms. Typically, they have to marry and produce offspring. If their outward appearance is questioned, they fear for their lives.⁷⁷⁵

Not only homosexuality/queerness is banned, but also any public discussion of LGBTQ+ issues.⁷⁷⁶ There is also no open discussion about most sexually transmitted diseases and LGBTQI+ cannot access healthcare for problems specifically related to their sexual orientations. Medical personnel and also police and other security forces, as a rule, conform to heteronormative orientations.⁷⁷⁷ As of 2023, '[t]here were few, very discreet, and mostly online-based LGBTQI+ organizations that held events.'⁷⁷⁸

1.8.3. Treatment in Al-Shabaab controlled areas

Al-Shabaab courts have issued death sentences for homosexuals in the recent past. In early 2017, Al-Shabaab reportedly executed two Somali men who had been accused of being gay.⁷⁷⁹ Already in 2013, it was reported within the (diaspora-based) Somali Gay Community that '18-year-old Mohamed Ali Baashi was stoned to death for sodomy by Al-Shabaab'.⁷⁸⁰ These cases were also reported by ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association).⁷⁸¹ According to the Finnish Immigration Service, Al-Shabaab's own radio station, Radio Andalus, reported in November 2018 that the organisation had executed a young man in Hiraan province on charges of homosexuality.⁷⁸² It added that the Swedish Foreign Ministry found that men suspected of homosexuality have been punished by rape in addition to the death penalty. However, this information was difficult to verify. In general, the number of people convicted of homosexuality is thought to be higher; most likely, case reporting is limited by fear.⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁴ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 45

⁷⁷⁵ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁷⁷⁶ PinkNews, Gay woman's immigration views change after visit to country with gay death penalty, 19 February 2025, [url](#); Drabent, D., Queer Somalis: The cross-cutting nature of human rights in Somalia and beyond, 22 January 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁷ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

⁷⁷⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 46

⁷⁷⁹ Mamba Online, 15 and 20-year-old youths executed in Somalia for homosexuality, 11 January 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁰ Steward, Colin, Report: Somalia too risky for LGBT people, 16 February 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁸¹ ILGA World, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update, 15 December 2020, [url](#), p. 80

⁷⁸² FIS, Somalia / Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen asema Somaliassa, päivitys Somalia [Status of sexual and gender minorities in Somalia, update], 24 February 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁸³ FIS, Somalia / Seksuaali- ja sukupuolivähemmistöjen asema Somaliassa, päivitys Somalia [Status of sexual and gender minorities in Somalia, update], 24 February 2021, [url](#), p. 3



1.9. Somalis who have resided for a long time in neighbouring countries or other countries in the region

1.9.1. Background and distinctions

Over the past four years, most returnees came from Yemen and from Kenya.⁷⁸⁴ From Yemen came 1 858 individuals. From Kenya came 427 individuals. From Libya came 188 individuals.⁷⁸⁵ One source reports that in 2023, the total number of returnees to Somalia was 2 516.⁷⁸⁶ These numbers are, however, especially regarding returnees from Kenya, at odds with other sources. Owigo (2022) found that, according to the UNHCR, as of August 2021, '133,166 Somali returnees have been recorded and assisted with the majority of the returnees coming from Kenya through the UNHCR-initiated voluntary repatriation program (VRP).⁷⁸⁷ They returned as result of the tripartite agreement entered between UNHCR, Kenya and Somalia in 2013 aiming at sending many of those Somalis who have been living in camps in Kenya for years back to Somalia.⁷⁸⁸ Other returnees, including from Libya, returned recently (2017-2023) assisted by the European Union's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, through a project that was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), called the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration. 'With a 603-million-euro budget, the initiative assisted the return of more than 134,000 individuals and reintegration of 124,000' from various African countries, including Somalia, in their countries of origin.⁷⁸⁹ The returnees assisted by the EU-IOM program were often young men stranded along their migration route (e.g., to North Africa and then onward to Europe). They often had experienced capture, torture and other forms of abuse. Their situation was different from 'those returning from Europe, Saudi Arabia, or elsewhere via an assisted voluntary return program.'⁷⁹⁰ Returnees mostly return to urban areas, largely because rural areas are still considered instable.⁷⁹¹

1.9.2. Situation and treatment upon return

Many returning refugees, especially those coming from camps in Kenya or Yemen, face displacement upon arrival in Somalia. They transform from returning refugees to internally displaced persons (IDPs). A reason for that are the high costs of rent and land in Mogadishu.

⁷⁸⁴ Somalia, National Bureau of Statistics, Migration Statistics Report 2024, 2024, p. [url](#), p. 21

⁷⁸⁵ Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, Migration Statistics Report 2024, p. [url](#), p. 21

⁷⁸⁶ Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, Migration Statistics Report 2024, p. [url](#), p. 19

⁷⁸⁷ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 123

⁷⁸⁸ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 126

⁷⁸⁹ Kuschminder, K., et al., Migration Interrupted: Can Stranded Migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan Rebuild Their Lives upon Return?, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁰ Kuschminder, K., et al., Migration Interrupted: Can Stranded Migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan Rebuild Their Lives upon Return?, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹¹ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 123



Others sought shelter with family and clan members back in Mogadishu.⁷⁹² Also Crawford et al. (2024) found that ‘In many ways, returnees face similar challenges and have similar profiles to the urban poor in Mogadishu.’ They added that ‘Only few returnees were in full-time employment, compared to 33 % of those who had not been displaced. More than 40 % of returnees were unemployed, compared to only 6% of the non-displaced community.’⁷⁹³ Girls and women returning into precarious conditions in Somalia face risks of sexual and gender-based violence.⁷⁹⁴

Important factors for reintegration are kinship and family. Kinship networks help getting financial and other support.⁷⁹⁵ Those returnees who were previous residents of Mogadishu still have a network on the ground that helps settling in.⁷⁹⁶ Social capital (personal networks) are necessary for sustaining livelihoods in Mogadishu.⁷⁹⁷ Clan belonging makes a huge difference for returnees. Those belonging to weak or minority clans face more challenges upon return to Somalia than those belonging to strong clans. Even returnees who have marketable skills have, if they belong to weak groups, a hard time to establish a stable living.⁷⁹⁸

Returnees from Kenya often maintain ties to the camps where they came from in Kenya. The life and opportunities in the camps is ‘part of their household strategies to allow them access to opportunities offered in the host country.’⁷⁹⁹ Some keep their children back in the camp in Kenya, where they can access schooling; some also consider returning to the businesses they had back in the camps.⁸⁰⁰

Returnees from Yemen were found to regret not being able to return back to Yemen due to conflict there. In Yemen they had more work opportunities and a higher quality of life. This reflects on the ‘the challenging economic situation in Somalia faced by much of its population.’⁸⁰¹ Also in Kismayo and Afgoye, ‘voluntary returnees who returned to Somalia expecting improved security and better job opportunities quickly became disillusioned by the realities of injustice and poverty that greeted their return.’⁸⁰² In general, many returnees had to work in the informal sector, working as cleaners, street vendors, or construction workers.⁸⁰³ Due to the economic challenges back in Somalia, sometimes also in combination with political

⁷⁹² Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), pp. 123, 128

⁷⁹³ Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 18-19.

⁷⁹⁴ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 128

⁷⁹⁵ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 129

⁷⁹⁶ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 20-21

⁷⁹⁷ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 21

⁷⁹⁸ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 21

⁷⁹⁹ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 129

⁸⁰⁰ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 19

⁸⁰¹ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 19

⁸⁰² Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 19

⁸⁰³ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 129

insecurity, many returnees contemplate returning to the countries where they came from (e.g. Kenya or Yemen).⁸⁰⁴

In contrast to those returnees who had spent many years in camps in Kenya or Yemen, those returnees who had been returned, e.g. with the help of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, after having been stranded along the way to Europe, were often happy to be back in Somalia. They felt ‘relief to have survived and be back in an environment of safety with one’s family.’⁸⁰⁵ Others, however felt shame since they had not told their families that they were leaving and also had cost their families dearly, due to the costs of migration. ‘Many families needed to reconcile the financial loss while also helping the returnee cope with trauma.’⁸⁰⁶ IOM provided some reintegration support, including health and financial support. This helped many returnees from Libya, Ethiopia and Sudan to establish themselves back in Somalia. Many did well after a year, compared to peers who had not migrated in the first place.⁸⁰⁷

1.10. Individuals who have to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab or other groups and militias

1.10.1. Repercussions for refusing to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab or for paying taxes to others

(a) Overview of Al-Shabaab tax system

The UN Panel of experts on Somalia, in its latest report from 2024, indicates that Al-Shabaab’s overall financial income for 2023 exceeded 150 million USD. This resulted from its extensive financial operations,⁸⁰⁸ and extremely diversified revenue generating system, whereby taxation through coercion or ‘taxtortion’ is the norm.⁸⁰⁹ Under this system ‘everything and anything is potentially a source of income’, not just the ‘flows’ of commodities, goods or vehicles coming into ports or passing through checkpoints.⁸¹⁰

Among others, Al-Shabaab relies on following sources of revenue: checkpoints, forced charitable or alms contributions (*zakat* or *zakah*, or *zakawat* in Somali,⁸¹¹ the annual wealth

⁸⁰⁴ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), p. 131

⁸⁰⁵ Kuschminder, K., et al., Migration Interrupted: Can Stranded Migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan Rebuild Their Lives upon Return?, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁶ Kuschminder, K., et al., Migration Interrupted: Can Stranded Migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan Rebuild Their Lives upon Return?, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁷ Kuschminder, K., et al., Migration Interrupted: Can Stranded Migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan Rebuild Their Lives upon Return?, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁸ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 62

⁸⁰⁹ UNODC, More powerful by the day - Terror Financing and Disruption Efforts in Somalia, March 2023, [url](#), p. 3

⁸¹⁰ UNODC, More powerful by the day - Terror Financing and Disruption Efforts in Somalia, March 2023, [url](#), pp. 3, 9

⁸¹¹ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 61 and footnote n. 136

tax⁸¹²), direct extortion of business, taxation of imports into ports, kidnappings for ransom,⁸¹³ taxation of farm produce, livestock selling, water and irrigation resources, vehicles registration fees, operating licences fee,⁸¹⁴ local tax imposed based on need (*infaq*),⁸¹⁵ as well as property and business ventures in Somalia.⁸¹⁶ For further information see also the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Actors \(June 2021\)](#). In the context of checkpoint (*isbaaro*) taxation, Al-Shabaab categorises its taxation system into four distinct streams: transit (*gadiid*), goods (*badeeco*), agricultural produce (*dalag*) and livestock (*xoolo*).⁸¹⁷ In 2024 new products and tariffs, such as on scrap metal, were also introduced.⁸¹⁸

Al-Shabaab can extort and levy taxes in areas under their direct control – heartland – as well as beyond it, where they do not have permanent presence, or where their presence is contested, depending on how strong the government and the state security forces are locally.⁸¹⁹

(b) Repercussions for refusing to pay taxes

In the absence of an effective protection system, Al-Shabaab can pressure anybody into paying taxes.⁸²⁰ Men and women are required to pay taxes to the group, despite the formal ban on women's work or businesses.⁸²¹ Threats and punishments are core parts of Al-Shabaab's enforcement tactics to coerce civilians into compliance and making sure the taxation systems runs smoothly.⁸²² Deadly⁸²³ or brutal violence is relatively rare being its threat or 'spectre' sufficient to discourage non-compliance.⁸²⁴ Tax-demands are not negotiable, but in specific cases people in need can bargain - to a certain extent - also with the help of clan elders.⁸²⁵ Women who cannot afford to pay taxes are sometimes told to hand over their children.⁸²⁶

⁸¹² ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), p. 14

⁸¹³ GITOC, Terror and taxes – Inside Al-Shabaab's revenue collection machine, December 2022, [url](#), p. 2; see also Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), p. 12

⁸¹⁴ Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), pp. 13, 22

⁸¹⁵ ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), p. 14; Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁸¹⁶ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 62

⁸¹⁷ GITOC, Terror and taxes – Inside Al-Shabaab's revenue collection machine, December 2022, [url](#), p. 2; Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 56-58

⁸¹⁸ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 64, pp. 58-60

⁸¹⁹ ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), pp. 11-13

⁸²⁰ UNODC, More powerful by the day - Terror Financing and Disruption Efforts in Somalia, March 2023, [url](#), pp. 11-12

⁸²¹ Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), pp. 17, 22

⁸²² ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), p. 16; Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁸²³ ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), p. 13

⁸²⁴ GITOC, Terror and taxes – Inside Al-Shabaab's revenue collection machine, December 2022, [url](#), pp. 16-17

⁸²⁵ ODI, Playing the long game - Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, August 2023, [url](#), pp. 13-14

⁸²⁶ Stern O. M., Al-Shabaab gendered economy, March 2021, [url](#), p. 22



Among others, checkpoints are a major source of revenue for Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is known for retaliating violently and scare ‘road users into compliance’,⁸²⁷ hence preventing them from using alternative routes.⁸²⁸ Al-Shabaab taxes vary depending on vehicles, on whether goods are imports or exports, and on whether they may benefit government-controlled areas. In which case traders might not be allowed to pass, be threatened with death, or made to pay double the normal tariff.⁸²⁹

At the end of August 2024, as a reaction to the new 5% sales tax, Al-Shabaab, while threatening dire consequences, warned banks and financial institutions not to comply with the new government directives and asked individuals to withdraw their money from those institutions failing to do so.⁸³⁰ See section [1.10.2 Repercussions for refusing to pay taxes to ‘others’](#) for further details.

Al-Shabaab retaliation for refusing to pay ‘taxes’,⁸³¹ included:

- Abductions: fifteen clan elders in Hagar village, near Afmadow (Lower Juba), were abducted on 16 July 2023, and taken to Jilib, because accused of defying order regarding tax collection in the region;⁸³² a truck driver travelling between Jowhar and Balcad, near Basra village (Middle Shabelle), was abducted on 19 July 2023 over a tax extortion dispute;⁸³³ two clan elders in Dabader village, near Afmadow (Lower Juba), were abducted on 21 June 2024, due to unpaid taxation to the group;⁸³⁴ two passenger vehicle drivers in Hagar, near Afmadow (Lower Juba), were abducted and taken to Jilib on 7 September 2024, due to alleged tax fraud.⁸³⁵
- Shooting and killing: on 1 December 2023, unidentified gunmen shot and killed a businessperson and injured two of his children in Bosaso (Bari), over a tax extortion dispute;⁸³⁶ on 10 February 2024, Al-Shabaab shot and killed a businessman in Bosaso (Bari), over a tax extortion dispute.⁸³⁷

⁸²⁷ Abdirahman Ali., Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 23

⁸²⁸ Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia’s Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 12; Abdirahman Ali., Brokering trade routes, 2023, [url](#), p. 23; Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 54

⁸²⁹ Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls – The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia’s Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 22

⁸³⁰ SMN, Al-Shabaab Issues Warning to Somali Banks Over New 5% Sales Tax, 26 August 2024, [url](#); Garowe On-line, Al-Shabaab threatens financial institutions over Somalia’s 5% sales tax, 26 August 2024, [url](#)

⁸³¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with Al-Shabaab as Actor 1, keyword filter ‘tax’, and manual filtering

⁸³² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41693

⁸³³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41694

⁸³⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44949

⁸³⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45647

⁸³⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43393, SOM43394

⁸³⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43634



1.10.2. Repercussions for refusing to pay taxes to ‘others’

(a) Overview of federal, regional and ‘other’ tax systems

FGS & FMS. Somalia FMS and the FGS rely essentially on three types of fiscal resources: customs from ports and airports - which are notably relevant for Mogadishu, Puntland and Jubbaland - inland revenues, and donor grants. Those FMS without functioning ports - Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and South-West - can rely on an extra line of budget support from the FGS. The FGS of Somalia partially controls resources limited to Mogadishu, while Puntland has a more diversified set of revenues, whereas the other FMS *de facto* do not collect many taxes.⁸³⁸ FMS have long list of taxes – between 24 and 28 – they claim to be collecting, but actually they are quite limited in most contexts,⁸³⁹ while local governments revenue generation powers remain on paper only in most cases.⁸⁴⁰ Local governments within the regional administrations are left with very limited fiscal capacity that is usually retained at the level of the regional state finance minister.⁸⁴¹ In Mogadishu the FGS and the BRA overlap in terms of fiscal governance.⁸⁴²

On 18 August 2024, the FGS introduced the five per cent (5 %) sales tax by taxing automatically merchant mobile money accounts for every transaction. This new tax was limited to Mogadishu for lack of fiscal federalism agreement and enforcement capacity.⁸⁴³ While tax compliance has varied across different parts of the city, with some of them remaining completely out of reach – including Heliwa, Daynile, Yaqshid, Garasbaley, and Suuqa-Xoolaha,⁸⁴⁴ Mogadishu’s business community has protested vehemently against its implementation, as well as against excessive and arbitrary taxation, on various occasions between the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025.⁸⁴⁵

ISIS. Another crucial actor in the tax system in Somalia, apart from Al-Shabaab and government institutions, is represented by the Islamic State in Somalia, which has recently regained prominence with its Al-Karrar office as a key administrative and financial hub for ISIL at global level.⁸⁴⁶ Based on recent estimates, ISS overall annual budget generated from extortion and illicit taxation would account for at least 4.3 million USD.⁸⁴⁷ Among other sources

⁸³⁸ SPA, Fiscal federalism in Somalia, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 16-17

⁸³⁹ SPA, Fiscal federalism in Somalia, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 17-20

⁸⁴⁰ SPA, The state of fiscal decentralization to local governments in Somalia, November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁴¹ SPA, The state of fiscal decentralization to local governments in Somalia, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 1-3

⁸⁴² SPA, Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) Taxation, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴³ SPA, Examining Somalia’s New Sales Tax, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 7

⁸⁴⁴ SPA, Examining Somalia’s New Sales Tax, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 12,

⁸⁴⁵ Barron’s, Somali Traders Protest Over Digital Sales Tax, 19 August 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Mogadishu Businesses Shut Down in Major Strike Against Illegal Taxation and Extortion, 18 August 2024, [url](#); The Africa Report, Somalia: Growing burden of taxes sparks mass protests, 4 September 2024, [url](#); Raxanreeb, Mogadishu Businesses Shut Down in Protest Against Unfair Government Taxes, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁶ Weiss C., and Webber L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-3; International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5; Weiss C., et al., Fatal Transaction: The Funding Behind the Islamic State’s Central Africa Province, June 2023, [url](#), pp. 6, 19-20; UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 30-32, 49

⁸⁴⁷ Weiss C., and Webber L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), p. 3



of revenue, ISS relies on extortion and tax collection from businesses in Bosasso – where it has reportedly surpassed Al-Shabaab - and elsewhere in Somalia, including Mogadishu.⁸⁴⁸

Checkpoints. Against this backdrop, government, federal member states, regional and local administrations, as well as at times individual commanders and politicians - along with their affiliated forces or clan militias - tend to overly rely, with competing claims, on checkpoint taxes, and whenever possible on import taxes, as sources of revenue.⁸⁴⁹ Around 60 % of all tax revenues in Somalia result from such indirect taxes.⁸⁵⁰ Most checkpoints across Somalia are controlled by a combination of government soldiers, local clan militias, and representatives of local, district or state government authorities.⁸⁵¹ Many clan militia checkpoints are loosely affiliated to or absorbed by a district, federal member state or the federal government.⁸⁵² For further information see [Somalia: Security Situation](#) (May 2025), including Map 1. IPIS, Distribution of violent checkpoint-related incidents (2020-2023),⁸⁵³ as well as other relevant EUAA reports.⁸⁵⁴ Conversely, temporary checkpoints, also known as '*isbaaro soo booda*', may be operated by *mooryaan* or bandits, a generic label used for armed men - they may be clan militia, soldiers or freelance operators – or by clan militia representatives in the context of clan disputes and blood money compensation.⁸⁵⁵ Federal and local government authorities often rely on pre-existing clan militias as government soldiers or deploy national security forces units on a clan basis to staff checkpoints. This engenders a culture of impunity and extortion among checkpoint operators that reflects the interest of the locally dominant clan.⁸⁵⁶

Checkpoints are hotspot of violence, they are tactically and strategically targeted, making the work of the checkpoint operator a 'high-risk occupation' and the life of passers-by at risk.⁸⁵⁷ Based on ACLED data, checkpoints across Somalia were the site of 707 reported incidents in the reference period, resulting in 678 estimated fatalities and a non-specified number of casualties, including civilians.⁸⁵⁸ Within this context, a way of navigating checkpoints and trying to minimise costs consists in bypassing them.⁸⁵⁹ However, checkpoint operators who catch

⁸⁴⁸ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 30-32, 49; see also EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM41499

⁸⁴⁹ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 64-69; see also Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia's Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), pp. 15-18, 22; Abdirahman Ali., Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 13

⁸⁵⁰ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 64

⁸⁵¹ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 28

⁸⁵² Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 24, 47

⁸⁵³ EUAA, Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025, [url](#), section 1.7 Checkpoint and road security in Somalia;

⁸⁵⁴ EUAA, Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 51-53; EASO, Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 42-44

⁸⁵⁵ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 14-15

⁸⁵⁶ Abdirahman Ali., Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), pp. 16-17

⁸⁵⁷ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 36-38

⁸⁵⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), filter 'checkpoint'

⁸⁵⁹ Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia's Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 12; Abdirahman Ali., Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 23



traders adopting such a strategy might retaliate by demanding exorbitant fees, robbing them, or even destroying their vehicle.⁸⁶⁰

(b) Repercussions for refusing to pay taxes to ‘others’

In the reference period, ACLED kept track of various incidents triggered by disputes over ‘taxes’ or extortion money, involving civilians on the one hand and government officials or security forces on the other hand, as well as ISIS operatives, or clan militia members.⁸⁶¹

Incidents listed below occurred over tax disputes and extortion money, including for refusing to pay taxes to government officials or security forces:

- shooting and killing of drivers, including tuk-tuk drivers: on 2 September 2023, a government soldier (SNA) killed a tuk-tuk driver in Afgooye (Lower Shabelle);⁸⁶² on 9 November 2023, a police traffic officer killed a tuk-tuk driver in Mogadishu - Hamar Weyne (Benadir);⁸⁶³ on 6 January 2024, a police officer killed a minibus driver at ex-Digfer checkpoint in Mogadishu - Hodan (Benadir);⁸⁶⁴ on 17 June 2024, unidentified gunmen - likely SNA - killed a taxi driver in Mogadishu - Wadajir (Banadir);⁸⁶⁵ on 31 July 2024, a government soldier (SNA) injured a civilian tuk-tuk driver in Mogadishu - Yaqshid (Benadir);⁸⁶⁶ on 10 August 2024, a Jubaland soldier killed a taxi driver at checkpoint in Dhobley town, near Afmadow (Lower Juba);⁸⁶⁷ on 12 February 2025, a government soldier (SNA) killed a tuk-tuk driver in the vicinity of Bulo Mareer (Lower Shabelle);⁸⁶⁸ on 2 March 2025, a government soldier (SNA) killed a civilian tuk-tuk driver near Al-Berri hospital in Mogadishu - Daynile (Benadir);⁸⁶⁹ on 15 March 2025, a police officer killed a civilian moto-taxi driver, in Mogadishu - Dharkenley (Benadir);⁸⁷⁰
- shooting and killing of other civilians: on 18 January 2024, government soldier (SNA) shot and killed a civilian in Macalin Noor neighbourhood in Mogadishu - Dharkenley (Benadir);⁸⁷¹ on 1 April 2024, a municipal tax officer (police) killed a civilian engineer in Mogadishu - Daynile (Banadir);⁸⁷² on 17 April 2024, police officers, attacked civilian businessmen at the Sinka Dheer market neighbourhood in Mogadishu - Daynile (Benadir), causing an unspecified number of casualties;⁸⁷³

⁸⁶⁰ Abdirahman Ali., *Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor*, 2023, [url](#), p. 23

⁸⁶¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with all Actors apart from Al-Shabaab selected as Actors 1, keyword filter ‘tax’, and manual filtering

⁸⁶² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42151

⁸⁶³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM42806

⁸⁶⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43334

⁸⁶⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44907

⁸⁶⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45311

⁸⁶⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM45393

⁸⁶⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM48968

⁸⁶⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49249

⁸⁷⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM49481

⁸⁷¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM43454

⁸⁷² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44045

⁸⁷³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44184

- beatings: on 5 November 2024, two groups of government security forces (SNA) clashed in Mogadishu (Benadir), over a tax argument regarding a soldier tax collector beating a businessman at his shop;⁸⁷⁴

Incidents listed below occurred for refusing to pay taxes to ISS:

- Bulsho construction company in Bosaso has been targeted on various occasions with planted IED, on 20 November 2023, and on 5 May 2024;⁸⁷⁵
- Bulsho trading company in Bosaso market was targeted on 15 May 2024, with a remote controlled planted IED resulting in unknown number of casualties;⁸⁷⁶
- Marhaba Trading Company warehouse in Bosaso was targeted with a grenade attack on 9 July 2024.⁸⁷⁷

Incidents listed below occurred for refusing to pay taxes to clan militias:

- on 7 May 2024, Hawadle clan militia shot and injured a truck driver in Qabno village (Belet Weyne, Hiraan) over a dispute related to tax collection;⁸⁷⁸
- on 10 April 2024, Hiiraan State Militia from Hawadle clan militia shot and killed a truck driver from Isaq clan in Belet Weyne (Weyne, Hiraan) over a tax dispute.⁸⁷⁹

2. Socio-economic situation in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and Garowe

2.1. Mogadishu

2.1.1. Overview

Mogadishu is the most populous city in Somalia.⁸⁸⁰ In early 2025, ca. 2 846 000 people are living in the city.⁸⁸¹ It consists of 20 districts. The old ones are: Wadajir, Dharkenley, Daynile, Wardigley, Hawl Wadaag, Waberi, Hamar Jajab, Hamar Weyne, Bondere, Karaan, Yaqshid, Huriwaa, Kahda, Hodan, Shibis, Abdulaziz, Shangani.⁸⁸² Recently, in May 2024, three new

⁸⁷⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM47037

⁸⁷⁵ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 48

⁸⁷⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44943

⁸⁷⁷ UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 48

⁸⁷⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44329

⁸⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), SOM44150

⁸⁸⁰ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁸¹ Mogadishu, Somalia Metro Area Population 1950-2025, [url](#); World Population Review: Mogadishu, [url](#)

⁸⁸² Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

districts were added: Gubadley, Darussalam, Garasbaaley.⁸⁸³ Mohamed Ahmed Amiir is the current mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir Regional Administration.⁸⁸⁴ As of February 2022, Benadir Region was the only region in Somalia completely controlled by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Mogadishu hosts the FGS. Its international airport and port are the country's largest two revenue sources. Mogadishu is the only city where the FGS collects taxes.⁸⁸⁵

In Mogadishu, the government depends heavily on thousands of African Union (AU) forces stationed there, protecting the airport and other strategically important locations. The SNA and the Somali police are sometimes acting as clan militia, not as a national force.⁸⁸⁶ Al-Shabaab has officially withdrawn from Mogadishu in mid-2011. Yet, the militant extremists have a sizable clandestine presence in the city. Al-Shabaab's 'secret police' called Amniyat has repeatedly infiltrated government and security agencies (see also [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#), 2023, Chapter 2.3.2).⁸⁸⁷ The group's presence in Mogadishu allows it to penetrate even the best-secured targets in the city.⁸⁸⁸ Al-Shabaab operates in Mogadishu, collecting taxes on large and small businesses on the big markets of the city, and also from individuals building houses or shops. Those who refuse to pay have to fear reprisals by the group, including attacks on their lives.⁸⁸⁹ Al-Shabaab can even summon people in Mogadishu it wishes to interrogate, if, for instance, a case is pending before an Al-Shabaab court outside of Mogadishu and a witness residing in the city is required. Al-Shabaab still has the capacity to call upon people (literally, using their phones) in Mogadishu to follow their orders and many people comply, also out of fear of reprisals.⁸⁹⁰ In many places, CCTV cameras have been installed.⁸⁹¹ Prof. Roland Marchal reported in March 2025 that there is more surveillance in the capital city.⁸⁹² However, there are still bombings and assassinations happening for which Al-Shabaab is responsible. Many people also do not know who to trust.⁸⁹³ For more information on Mogadishu overall security situation see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025](#).

Security conditions in the city differ from one neighbourhood to another. Peripheral and semi-peripheral neighbourhoods are considered more insecure than highly protected zones near the international airport and in the centre.⁸⁹⁴ However, it is also true that areas in which

⁸⁸³ SMN, Mogadishu Expands as President Recognizes Three New Districts, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁴ BRA, Mohamed Ahmed Amiir, 2024, [url](#). By law, the Mayor of Mogadishu also holds the title of Governor of Benadir Regional Administration (BRA)

⁸⁸⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 9; see also SPA, Examining Somalia's New Sales Tax, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 7

⁸⁸⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁸⁷ Williams, Wendy (March 2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁸⁸ ACLED 1 March 2024: Al-Shabaab's Infiltration of a Military Base in Mogadishu and Somaliland's Conflict. [url](#)

⁸⁸⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 37; Amina, Telephone interview, 24 June 2024. Amina is a Somali scholar with focus on social science research based in Mogadishu

⁸⁹⁰ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024 and 28 March 2025. Siyaad is a medical laboratory supervisor in Mogadishu. Originally from northern Somalia he relocated to Mogadishu in 2013

⁸⁹¹ Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

⁸⁹² Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025

⁸⁹³ Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

⁸⁹⁴ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

government offices or African Union infrastructure is located, or where officials spend time, are prime targets for Al-Shabaab attacks.⁸⁹⁵

(a) Demographics and clan composition/distribution

Mogadishu is inhabited largely by Hawiye from the clans Abgaal, Habar Gedir and Murosade. Besides, certain minority groups such as Reer Hamar are traditional inhabitants of the city.⁸⁹⁶ Moreover, members from many other Somali clans reside in Mogadishu as students, professionals, business people or government workers.⁸⁹⁷ Mogadishu is 'not as segregated by clan as other areas of Somalia'. Still, clan membership is important. Hawiye clan holds the most powerful positions.⁸⁹⁸ Minority group members and members of other clans face exclusion and discrimination.⁸⁹⁹ Particularly in the oldest quarters Shangani and Hamar Weyne, Reer Hamar- which consist of many small groups, see section [1.4 Minorities](#) - have their ancestral homes.⁹⁰⁰

Mogadishu is also hosting a considerable IDP population. Based on UNOCHA data, at the end of 2024, out of 3 812 registered IDP sites across the country, Mogadishu hosted 2 057 sites, with an overall population of more than 1 160 million people.⁹⁰¹ Most IDPs come from neighbouring regions such as Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle, while some come also from Bay region.⁹⁰² Most IDPs in Mogadishu reside in the districts Daynile, Hodan and Kahda.⁹⁰³ Some live in camps while many live in informal sites. Most of these sites are found in Daynile (1 091), and in Kahda (966).⁹⁰⁴ Many IDPs do not belong to dominant clans in Mogadishu and thus cannot rely on effective clan support when needed. They do not have a power base in the city.⁹⁰⁵

(b) Humanitarian situation overview

Somalia, and notably Mogadishu, depends almost entirely on foreign aid to assist IDPs,⁹⁰⁶ the most vulnerable group in the capital. They usually lack social capital to find support, jobs, housing, and get access to health care. There is no effective public support network. Many IDPs sustain themselves by daily labour, or they are dependent on support by relatives (e.g., from abroad) or humanitarian assistance.⁹⁰⁷ IDPs are in a subordinate and marginalised position throughout Mogadishu. Many choose to stay close to their informal settlements. They

⁸⁹⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁸⁹⁶ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 13-15

⁸⁹⁷ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024

⁸⁹⁸ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 10.

⁸⁹⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025

⁹⁰⁰ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 107

⁹⁰¹ EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰² Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁰³ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

⁹⁰⁴ EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁵ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁰⁶ AP, US aid freeze paralyzes NGOs working to help millions of internally displaced people in Somalia, 12 February 2025, [url](#); see also New Humanitarian (The), The government view on ending Somalia's humanitarian aid 'trap', 6 August 2024, [url](#); SATG, Rethinking Humanitarian Aid in Somalia: From Dependency to Sustainable Solutions, January 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁷ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 13-17

typically cannot claim urban land rights or protection from encroachment or forced eviction.⁹⁰⁸ For the year 2024, some 197 000 eviction cases affecting IDPs were documented in Somalia, primarily in Mogadishu and surroundings.⁹⁰⁹ IDPs in Mogadishu are in many camps dependent on informal camp or settlement managers. They act as gatekeepers providing land, basic services (e.g. water and sanitation) and some protections ‘in exchange for either cash – typically between \$15 and \$20 each month – or a proportion of humanitarian assistance – up to 60% in some cases.’⁹¹⁰

2.1.2. Mobility and accessibility

(a) Mogadishu airport and flight connections

Mogadishu International Airport/Aden Adde International Airport serves as the primary entry point to Somalia.⁹¹¹ Airlines flying to Mogadishu include Daallo Airlines, Fly Dubai, Egypt Air, Qatar Airways, Uganda Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways and Turkish Airlines.⁹¹² A recent source (March 2025) mentioned that Fly Dubai and Kenyan Airways have been suspended (for the time being) in June 2024.⁹¹³ Inside Somalia, some smaller companies operate such as Jubba Airways, Freedom Airline Express, African Express, Daallo Airlines, Salaam Air Express, and Halla Airlines. Daallo Airlines is the oldest airline; it was established in 1991 already.⁹¹⁴ The Aden Adde International Airport of Mogadishu (MGQ) is located some 5 km from the city centre. It offers direct or transit flights to various airports in the region including Ambouli Airport (JIB) in Djibouti, Berbera Airport (BBO), Bosasso Airport (BSA), Dubai (DXB), Entebbe (EBB), Galkacyo Airport (GLK), Hargeisa Airport (HGA), Istanbul (IST), Jeddah (JED), Nairobi (NBO), RiyanMukalli Airport (RIY), Sharjah (SHJ), and Wajir Airport (WJR).⁹¹⁵ For more details see [EUAA COI Report: Somalia - Key Socio-Economic Indicators](#), 2021, chapter 1.2.1. According to the Finnish Immigration Service, for most ordinary Somalis air travel is prohibitively expensive.⁹¹⁶

In February 2023, the IATA Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) was relaunched in Mogadishu, after a 33-year hiatus. IATA-accredited passenger sales agents use the BSP to facilitate selling, reporting, and remitting transactions.⁹¹⁷ Also in 2023, the safety and operational efficiency of the Somali airspace was enhanced. Modern radio navigation and other technological infrastructure were deployed, enhancing ‘situational awareness along busy air corridors, especially at intersections with routes that connect diverse global regions. The

⁹⁰⁸ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p.21

⁹⁰⁹ UNOCHA 2025: Humanitarian Need and Response Plan Somalia 2025, [url](#), p. 49

⁹¹⁰ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 22

⁹¹¹ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 29

⁹¹² Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), pp. 31-32

⁹¹³ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹¹⁴ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 33; Flight Connections, [url](#)

⁹¹⁵ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 37. See also: Flight Connections: Flights from Mogadishu, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹⁶ Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 29

⁹¹⁷ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 35

region's airspace now adheres to Class A regulations.⁹¹⁸ This resulted in an increase in the number of international airlines using Somalia's airspace. Before these upgrades, there were approximately 220 daily flights through the country's airspace; this number has, as of June 2024, increased to 500.⁹¹⁹ In 2024, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that in 2023 the number of arrivals was 253 008 and the number of departures was 233 808 at Mogadishu International Airport.⁹²⁰

(b) Internal mobility, including checkpoints

Challenges to mobility in Mogadishu include insecurity (caused by Al-Shabaab bombings), poor transportation infrastructure, lack of traffic regulation and a massive increase of traffic including old vehicles and drivers without license.⁹²¹ On most roads, there are no traffic signs, no traffic lights and no traffic police.⁹²² Some roads are damaged by decades of fighting. Others have more recently been rehabilitated by local communities and business people. The Turkish government also constructed some 23 kilometres of smooth tarmac roads in Mogadishu.⁹²³ Moreover, some of the newly built and/or rehabilitated roads have been partially closed or are restricted due to security concerns.⁹²⁴ This again hinders public transportation and produces traffic jams.⁹²⁵ As of March 2025, floods have again damaged or destroyed some roads.⁹²⁶

Schouten (2023) identified 22 checkpoints in the Benadir region, which encompasses the capital Mogadishu.⁹²⁷ Those checkpoints in the city are major targets for Al-Shabaab attacks.⁹²⁸ Former Deputy Police Commissioner General Zakia Hussen, who recently left the active police service, explained that there are 54 junctions with checkpoints in the Somali capital. At each of these checkpoints, police forces work in tandem with NISA officers (in civilian clothes). Every vehicle passing through is searched.⁹²⁹ Additionally, mobile checkpoints are occasionally set up by the police to conduct random checks.⁹³⁰ Around Villa Somalia (in Wardigley) and along the roads leading there (through Hamar Weyne, Hamar Jajab, Waberi and Hawl Wadaag), checkpoints are set up which are run by the presidential guard/Red Barrets (Somali: kofiyad cas). These are very strict and only let vehicles through which have a special authorisation.⁹³¹ Cars have to be parked before the checkpoints and drivers' ID cards have to be shown to soldiers who then may allow the pass through.⁹³² This is particularly the

⁹¹⁸ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 34

⁹¹⁹ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 34

⁹²⁰ Somalia, National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract, November 2024, [url](#), p. 15

⁹²¹ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹²² Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹²³ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹²⁴ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹²⁵ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹²⁶ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹²⁷ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 26

⁹²⁸ Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 37

⁹²⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹³⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025; Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, 2022 [url](#), p. 60

⁹³¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹³² Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

case in areas where government buildings are located. Thus, citizens seeking to access government services will face particular challenges with accessing these areas.⁹³³ Hagmann et al. (2022) found that ‘insecurity renders Mogadishu Somalia’s most immobile city’. They indicate that ‘[e]ntire neighbourhoods have limited accessibility as the government seeks to quell the al-Shabaab insurgency and protect itself from attacks [...] the “green zone” around Halane and Aden Adde International Airport are blocked to Bajaj and minibuses.’⁹³⁴ There are four major checkpoints on the way to the Mogadishu international airport. These are run by NISA. After the checkpoints, AU troops are guarding the actual gates to the airport.⁹³⁵

The number of vehicles in Mogadishu is constantly increasing. Particularly three-wheeled motor rickshaws (*bajaj* in Somali, also known as tuk-tuk elsewhere) flood the streets.⁹³⁶ Some of the mostly young drivers do not have driving licenses. They create frequent traffic jams, which can cost people many hours while moving across the city.⁹³⁷ Public minibuses are also gradually disappearing from the streets, and the widely used *bajaj* has become the dominant public transport mode in the city.⁹³⁸ To manage the flood of *bajajs*, the government divided them into ‘A’ and ‘B’ *bajajs* and allows them to operate only on alternating days.⁹³⁹ The overcrowding causes jams and security challenges, as crowded places are vulnerable to attacks with vehicle-borne explosive devices (VBIED).⁹⁴⁰ IDPs, who often are very poor and live at the margins of Mogadishu, are less mobile. Many cannot afford motorised transport and/or have to walk significant distances to the nearest bus stop.⁹⁴¹

(c) Accessing and settling in the city

There are four major checkpoints when one enters Mogadishu from the surrounding areas. One is called ‘Jazeera’, coming from the south. The other is ‘Ex-Kontrol Afgooye’ from the west. The third is ‘Sinka Dheer’ from the north-west; and the fourth is called ‘Ex-control Bal’ad’ from the north. These checkpoints are manned by *Haramcad*, special police units also known as *Cheetah*, and by NISA. Occasionally, AU soldiers also operate at those checkpoints.⁹⁴² Incoming vehicles are digitally screened. The checkpoints are connected with the database of the Ministry of Transportation for that. Not registered vehicles are not allowed to pass.⁹⁴³ Hagmann et al. (2022) found that ‘[a]t the southern checkpoint towards Afgoi everybody must offload their vehicles for a thorough screening’.⁹⁴⁴ Some of the checkpoints leading into the capital are manned by Somali Police supported by either Kenyan or Ugandan forces with dogs

⁹³³ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹³⁴ Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, RVI, 2022, [url](#), p. 56

⁹³⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹³⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹³⁷ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹³⁸ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹³⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁴⁰ Mohamed Adam, Urban Mobility Complexities in Mogadishu, 26 February 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁴¹ Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, 2022, [url](#), p. 54.

⁹⁴² Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁴³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁴⁴ Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, 2022, [url](#), p. 60.

specially trained to sniff explosives.⁹⁴⁵ Anyone coming in by plane goes through normal screening at the international airport.⁹⁴⁶

Any Somali can just enter Mogadishu. But to settle in, one needs connections. Typically, relatives would accommodate a newcomer, at least temporarily. To rent or buy a place, one needs to go through local government registration. NISA is working closely with local governments to check on newcomers. One normally needs local relatives or acquaintances as guarantors.⁹⁴⁷ Also to find employment, one needs a network.⁹⁴⁸ Regarding IDPs coming to the city, Hagmann et al. (2022) mentioned that '[a] web of local powerbrokers, usually drawn from the dominant clans in a particular district and comprised of landowners, district officials, businessmen and gatekeepers, have effectively monopolised the business of urban informal settlements and inward migration to Mogadishu'.⁹⁴⁹

(d) Documents and procedures for accessing and settling in the city

Newcomers (Somalis) coming from abroad by plane go through the normal entry procedures at the Mogadishu international airport. They need to have valid passports. Others coming by land (from the regions) to Mogadishu go through the checkpoints (mentioned above) leading into the city. For settling down, newcomers typically need to be registered with the local government, which includes some background checking by NISA.⁹⁵⁰ Those travelling by land do not necessarily need ID documents. Yet, for renting or buying property, they need to go through a registration process with local authorities.⁹⁵¹

2.1.3. Socioeconomic indicators

(a) Economic overview and food security

Mogadishu being the largest city in Somalia and featuring the port as major economic hub exhibits the largest growth opportunities. Economic growth is hampered by increasing costs for land and property, and scarcity of water.⁹⁵² Land and property prices in Mogadishu are generally high. Disputes over land titles are common. Some hold titles since the time of President Mohamed Siyad Barre [1969-1991]. Others grabbed land in the context of the civil war (1991-). Hagmann et al. (2022) reported that Al-Shabaab gains influence as effective adjudicator of land conflicts in the capital.⁹⁵³ Electricity access is near universal in Mogadishu, but electricity prices are relatively high (ca. 0.4 USD/kilowatt). Electricity provision is organised by oligopolistic cartels.⁹⁵⁴ The unreliability of water supplies is affecting 53 percent of firms in

⁹⁴⁵ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁴⁶ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁴⁷ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025; Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

⁹⁴⁸ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025; Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

⁹⁴⁹ Hagmann, T., et al., *Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia*, 2022, [url](#), p. 21

⁹⁵⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁵¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

⁹⁵² World Bank, *Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda*, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁹⁵³ Hagmann, T., et al., *Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia*, 2022, [url](#), pp. 32 and 39.

⁹⁵⁴ World Bank, *Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda*, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 14 and 77; Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

Mogadishu.⁹⁵⁵ Still, in Mogadishu the productivity level for all types of entrepreneurial businesses is high in comparison to other places in Somalia.⁹⁵⁶

Most businesses in Mogadishu are small and have one to five employees. One quarter in fact only employs the owner. Only seven percent have more than 20 employees.⁹⁵⁷ Most business are in service provision.⁹⁵⁸ Two-thirds of firms are estimated to be informal. Informality affects tax collection, worker security, and the potential for businesspeople to engage in long-term investment.⁹⁵⁹ Even among formal businesses, half are micro enterprises of no more than five employees.⁹⁶⁰ Women rarely own large formal businesses. Yet, among the informal and formal micro businesses, they hold a large share, especially in food production and tea shops.⁹⁶¹ The biggest market in Mogadishu is Bakara market. It hosts more than 20 000 indoor businesses housed in some 7 000 buildings in addition to numerous outdoor businesses.⁹⁶² Besides, Mogadishu port is a major business hub. Moreover, telecommunication and mobile banking have a huge monthly turnover, with 70% of Somalis regularly using mobile money services.⁹⁶³ Most revenue for the Somali government is collected in Mogadishu.⁹⁶⁴ Al-Shabaab is another crucial actor in this domain, with interests primarily in revenue generation. It collects its own taxes in the city.⁹⁶⁵ Al-Shabaab taxes businesses, but also private persons e.g. building houses.⁹⁶⁶

(b) Housing and shelter

Mogadishu is characterised by socio-spatial and economic differentiation.⁹⁶⁷ Security and area of residence are connected. In the secure zone near the airport rent prices are highest.⁹⁶⁸ This is where government institutions, foreign embassies and international organisations are concentrated.⁹⁶⁹ Government officials, diaspora members, foreigners, and business people mostly reside here. In the outer districts, the level of insecurity is high. Criminal gangs operate there.⁹⁷⁰ Also Al-Shabaab has a clandestine but effective presence there.⁹⁷¹ A one to two bedroom apartment (including bathroom, kitchen and living room) in one of the new apartment houses in the secure zone near the international airport costs 700 to 1200 USD/month.⁹⁷² In

⁹⁵⁵ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 14-15

⁹⁵⁶ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. XV

⁹⁵⁷ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 63

⁹⁵⁸ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 65

⁹⁵⁹ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁹⁶⁰ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 63

⁹⁶¹ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 65

⁹⁶² World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 104

⁹⁶³ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 24

⁹⁶⁴ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 10; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 37

⁹⁶⁵ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁹⁶⁶ Amina, Telephone interview, 24 June 2024

⁹⁶⁷ Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, 2022, [url](#), p. 40

⁹⁶⁸ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁹⁶⁹ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiralling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁰ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiralling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁷¹ Landinfo, Somalia: The security situation in Mogadishu and al-Shabaab's influence in the city, 8 September 2022, [url](#), pp. 5 and 9

⁹⁷² Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025



the districts Abdulaziz, Hawl Wadaag, Hodon or Waberi, where many young professionals reside, it is slightly cheaper. Apartments with up to four bedrooms in this area cost some 300 to 700 USD/month.⁹⁷³ Families with two to three children live here, if they have a middle-class income, as well as young professionals who frequently share flats, before they get married. Poorer people reside in outer districts like Karaan, Yaqshid and Kahda. There one pays 90-250 USD/month for either a small stone house with two to three bedrooms or, at the cheap end, a shack (*jingad* in Somali). In the cheapest parts of Daynile or Kahda one can get a shack for 50 USD/month. Below that come the IDP camps, often situated at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum.⁹⁷⁴

Those who own houses or land are usually from the dominant groups in Mogadishu, including particularly Hawiye. Many others do not own land or houses.⁹⁷⁵ The income of many inhabitants is rather low. Thus, many people remain tenants for a long time.⁹⁷⁶ The housing situation is aggravated by constant movement from rural areas to Mogadishu.⁹⁷⁷ Additionally, climate change including more frequent droughts and floods foster rural to urban migration. This puts pressure on the already marginalised areas, where IDPs and the poor reside, and increases the need for humanitarian assistance in Mogadishu.⁹⁷⁸

(c) Hygiene, water and sanitation

In the expensive neighbourhoods in the secure zone, many houses and apartments are connected to the water system through pipes. The tap water is used for cooking and washing. But it is not considered clean enough for direct human consumption, at least by people with middle class or high income.⁹⁷⁹ Yet, poorer people are also drinking tap water.⁹⁸⁰ Better off people buy bottled water or get it delivered in larger quantities (e.g., up to 40 litre bottles) into their houses or apartments.⁹⁸¹ There are also some wells in the city where people can drink water.⁹⁸² Monthly costs for tap water depend on consumption. Several sources questioned about their regular water costs mentioned that a household of six people (grown-ups and children) would pay between 20 and 30 USD/months for the tap water. Clean water for human consumption is extra.⁹⁸³

Hagmann et al. (2022) found that '[w]ater delivery and consumption patterns reflect existing urban inequalities'.⁹⁸⁴ While piped water is available in the better off (and more secure) districts, people in poorer and outer (and more insecure) districts have to rely on shallow wells,

⁹⁷³ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁹⁷⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

⁹⁷⁵ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025. Fadumo works as medical doctor in Mogadishu where she has been based for more than a decade

⁹⁷⁶ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁷ Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12.

⁹⁷⁸ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 39

⁹⁷⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁸⁰ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁸¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁸² Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁸³ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025; Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁸⁴ Hagmann, T., et al., Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia, 2022, [url](#), p. 42



water kiosks, water trucks or donkey carts. The latter are used where roads and access are particularly bad.⁹⁸⁵

In neighbourhoods near the Indian Ocean wells cannot be used because of salinity.⁹⁸⁶ Urban flooding in combination with shortcomings in the sewage system planning and the malfunctioning waste management system produce problems regarding water supply and consumption in Mogadishu. Human waste and other waste not professionally deposited contaminates floodwaters which again pollutes the groundwater and wells.⁹⁸⁷ IDPs are most vulnerable to water shortage and water pollution. In the past, urban flooding had also very negative effects, especially on IDPs.⁹⁸⁸ On the other hand, at the beginning of 2022 only 30 per cent of IDP sites in Benadir/Mogadishu had access to water nearby.⁹⁸⁹

(d) Healthcare

The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) found in 2024 that the ‘majority of hospitals and clinics in the country is located in the Banadir region and therefore Mogadishu has more hospitals and clinics than any other of the federal member states’.⁹⁹⁰ In early 2025, some 18 larger hospitals exist in Mogadishu, including Benadir, Medina and De Marino (aka Martino) Hospital, which are public, and Aden Adde, Kalkal, Somali Sudanese, Ummo, Digfer (aka Erdogan), Yardimeli, Jazera, Dufle, Fiqi, Dalmar, Forlanini, Habeeb, Liban, Shaafi and Hodon Hospital, which are private. Digfer/Erdogan and Yardimeli Hospital are Turkish-owned. They are built on public land which has been provided for free by the government. The services are slightly cheaper than in fully private hospitals.⁹⁹¹ Forlanini, Habeeb and Digfer/Erdogan have psychiatric wardens. Medina Hospital is mainly used by the police forces but offers also some services to general public.⁹⁹² The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in its 2020 study on health care in Mogadishu, that used ‘a sample of six health care facilities’, found that the hospitals in Mogadishu (which were in the sample) had a capacity of between 25 and 200 beds, except for the public Benadir Hospital, which had ca. 500 beds.⁹⁹³ Therefore, the number of beds of all hospitals in Mogadishu is likely to be higher. The public hospitals in Mogadishu are officially ‘free of charge to the patients, including the poor and displaced populations.’⁹⁹⁴ Yet, the DIS found in 2024 that ‘there may be “informal fees” and other costs, which may hinder poor people from accessing health care.’⁹⁹⁵

There are contradictory statements on the fee/non-fee involved with public hospitals in Mogadishu. Fadumo, who is a medical professional who studied medicine in Mogadishu and works as surgeon, mentioned that there is no admission fee for Benadir and De Marino

⁹⁸⁵ Hagmann, T., et al., *Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia*, 2022, [url](#), pp. 42-43

⁹⁸⁶ Hagmann, T., et al., *Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia*, 2022, [url](#), p. 42

⁹⁸⁷ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., *Mogadishu: City report*, August 2024, [url](#), p. 39; Hagmann, T., et al., *Commodified Cities: Urbanization and public goods in Somalia*, 2022, [url](#), pp. 42-43, 50

⁹⁸⁸ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., *Mogadishu: City report*, August 2024, [url](#), p. 37

⁹⁸⁹ UNOCHA, *Somalia: Drought Situation Report No. 6*, 20 April 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁹⁰ DIS, *Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu*, March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁹¹ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁹² Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) March 2024: *Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu*, [url](#), p. 52

⁹⁹³ DIS, *Somalia – Health System*, November 2020, [url](#), pp. 45- 46

⁹⁹⁴ DIS, *Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu*, March 2024, [url](#), p. 14

⁹⁹⁵ DIS, *Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu*, March 2024, [url](#), p. 14



Hospital. Treatment including inpatient treatment is free of charge. However, the medical supply of the public hospitals is limited. If a patient needs medication or dressing material or any other help that is not available, he/she has to pay it privately.⁹⁹⁶ Ahmed, who works as laboratory supervisor in Yardimeli Hospital, mentioned that, in early 2025, the public hospitals in Mogadishu started demanding admission fees of around 3 USD.⁹⁹⁷

The quality of healthcare services in Mogadishu (and elsewhere in Somalia) is poorly controlled. Private hospitals generally offer better services. Their costs are considerable.⁹⁹⁸ This starts with admission fees between 7 and 13 USD (just to see a doctor). Stationary treatment varies between ca. 20 USD/night in Yardimeli Hospital, 30 USD/night in Aden Adde, and 50 USD/night in Digfer/Erdogan Hospital.⁹⁹⁹ Prices for treatments vary greatly, depending on the complexity and time of treatment. For instance, a small ambulant treatment for an abscess that needs a minimal surgery may cost 50 USD plus follow-up medication. A caesarean section costs between 250 and 300 USD. An orthopaedic fixation costs between 1 000 and 1 500 USD. An operation for breast cancer in Erdogan Hospital including follow-up treatment of some weeks costs around 8 000 USD.¹⁰⁰⁰ Many specialised treatments like dialysis, organ transplantation, more complicated reconstructive/plastic surgery, and treatment for some specific types of cancer, are not or only very limitedly available (in Mogadishu and across Somalia).¹⁰⁰¹ Costs for some specialised treatment can be so expensive that these treatments are only available to the rich.¹⁰⁰² Complicated cases must be treated outside of the country, e.g. in Kenya, on the Arabic peninsula or in India. Costs for such treatments are private.¹⁰⁰³

Mental health care is very basic in Mogadishu (and across Somalia). Usually, only very severe conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are identified as mental disorders. Persons suffering from anxiety or depression are usually not diagnosed and treated. The number of psychiatrists and psychologists in Mogadishu is small. The infrastructure for mental health treatment is very limited. There is a huge stigma against people with mental health issues in Somali society.¹⁰⁰⁴ Besides, 'accessibility of treatments is challenging due to high costs and insufficient knowledge about patients' symptoms among health workers'.¹⁰⁰⁵

(e) Education for children

In Mogadishu, there are many possibilities to study up to the tertiary level. However, curriculum standards vary, and there is often a lack of resources and equipment. There are public and private schools in Mogadishu.¹⁰⁰⁶ Those with sufficient income prefer private schools for their children. Private elementary and middle schools cost 25-30 USD/month per child. Private secondary schools cost 30-50 USD/months per child. The more expensive

⁹⁹⁶ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁹⁷ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

⁹⁹⁸ DIS, Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu, March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁹⁹ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰⁰⁰ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰⁰¹ DIS, Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu, March 2024, [url](#), p. 17-18 and 26

¹⁰⁰² DIS, Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu, March 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰⁰³ Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰⁰⁴ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

¹⁰⁰⁵ DIS, Somalia: Health Care Services in Mogadishu, March 2024, [url](#), p. 28.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 33



schools offer pick-up and delivery service and include meals for the children. Public schools are officially free of charge, but de facto cost some 10-15 USD/month per child. The quality of the public schools is considered low.¹⁰⁰⁷ For many poor people even the public schools are too expensive and they cannot afford to send their children to school in Mogadishu.¹⁰⁰⁸

(f) Means of basic subsistence and employment

Finding a job in Mogadishu usually requires some support by relatives on the ground, or by government officials (who are also normally asked for support in their capacity as patrilineal relatives). Relatives who run a business are asked to employ their kin. Government officials who are representatives of their own clan or lineage are asked to pave the way into a lucrative job. People without any relevant social ties in Mogadishu face serious challenges getting a middle to well-paid job, regardless of their qualification.¹⁰⁰⁹ Only international organisations managed by foreigners offer a neutral application process.¹⁰¹⁰ Salaries vary greatly across professions. The vast majority of inhabitants of Mogadishu earns low salaries as maids (50-100 USD/months), watchmen (100-150 USD/months), waiters (150-200 USD/months) or as simple soldiers or policemen (200 USD/months plus food allowances). A nurse earns some 200 USD/month when he/she is a beginner. A qualified nurse or any other experienced professional can earn 350 to 500 USD/months.¹⁰¹¹ Higher ranking soldiers and police officers can earn between 300 and 500 USD/month (plus food allowances). A military or police general earns 1 000 USD/month (plus food allowances).¹⁰¹² Government officials often seek to get several salaries to increase their monthly income. Among the top earners are those working for international organisations. Top salaries in Mogadishu can go up to 6 000 USD/month.¹⁰¹³

While there is a construction boom ongoing in Mogadishu, the general unemployment rate is still high, with the displaced and the urban poor severely lacking economic inclusion.¹⁰¹⁴ There is more poverty in Mogadishu than in other urban areas, likely because of the presence of many displaced persons. IDPs are among the poorest and most vulnerable populations.¹⁰¹⁵ Life is not very cheap in Mogadishu. Rents are higher here than elsewhere in Somalia. Additionally, electricity is expensive in Mogadishu. A family of six in a four-bedroom flat pays 25-35 USD/months for electricity. Besides, the cables are often old and/or not well-maintained. This sometimes leads to considerable losses and also to fires. Water needs to be paid. Food is not expensive if bought on local markets (and not in the supermarket).¹⁰¹⁶ One person living in the outskirts of Mogadishu, in a shack, still may have to pay 50-90 USD/rent per month, plus water and food (ca. 150 USD/month).¹⁰¹⁷ The minimum costs for survival (without humanitarian aid)

¹⁰⁰⁷ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰⁰⁸ Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 31

¹⁰⁰⁹ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰¹⁰ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰¹¹ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰¹² Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025

¹⁰¹³ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰¹⁴ New Humanitarian (The), As Mogadishu's skyline transforms, the urban poor call for economic inclusion, 11 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁵ World Bank, Somalia Urbanization Review: Fostering Cities as Anchors of Development, 2021, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁰¹⁶ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025; Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025

¹⁰¹⁷ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 25 March 2025



would thus be around 200-250 USD/month for an adult. This does not include healthcare. This is more than unskilled workers would earn per month in Mogadishu. There are no public social services supporting the needy.¹⁰¹⁸ Many have to rely on help from relatives in the diaspora to make ends meet.¹⁰¹⁹

2.1.4. Social support networks and availability of support to specific groups

(a) Clan-based protection

Clan protection is still relevant in Mogadishu. Police officers are often from dominant clan-families (Hawiye, Darood, Dir and Rahhanweyn). In their engagement with the population, it can make a difference if a person who addresses the police or is controlled is from a majority or a minority group. Minority group members are frequently harassed. Recently, however, ordinary people try to document abuse by officials including the police through smartphone video or voice recordings and activism on social media, which can create pressure on officials. Otherwise, elders or MPs from influential families still try to interfere in arrests or court proceedings in case their close relatives are concerned. But this happens less frequently than it did a few years ago.¹⁰²⁰

(b) Returnees and vulnerable groups

Much land and real estate, which is increasingly valuable, is bought by well-off returnees from the Somali diaspora and local political and economic elites in Mogadishu. Much of the land and buildings in Mogadishu have been forcefully occupied by militias. Until today, those owning land or real estate rely on clan support. New acquisitions of (private or even public) land are often accompanied by forcible evictions of vulnerable populations residing in informal settlements and camps.¹⁰²¹

2.2. Hargeisa

2.2.1. Overview

Hargeisa is the capital city of the Republic of Somaliland, a de facto state in north-western Somalia.¹⁰²² The government in Hargeisa considers Somaliland as an independent country, albeit lacking international recognition.¹⁰²³ Hargeisa is also an economic hub in Somaliland, located along the 'East Africa City Corridor' connecting the deep-sea port of Berbera (Somaliland) with Jigjiga (Ethiopia) and all the way to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.¹⁰²⁴ The

¹⁰¹⁸ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

¹⁰¹⁹ World Bank, Somalia Country Economic Memorandum: Towards an Inclusive Jobs Agenda, June 2021, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰²⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025.

¹⁰²¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰²² Somaliland, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Central Statistics and Research Department, Somaliland in Figures 2024, September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰²³ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

¹⁰²⁴ Cities Alliance, East Africa City Corridor, 2024, [url](#), p. 5



city has become a hub for both economic activity and humanitarian response, making it a magnet for job seekers and refugees (from the region) and IDPs alike.¹⁰²⁵

Hargeisa is considered to be one of the fastest-growing cities in the Somali peninsula.¹⁰²⁶ The city is located on the northern Somali plateau at 1 334 meters above sea level.¹⁰²⁷ Hargeisa has a mayor, vice-mayor, city councils, and several municipal departments that make up the local municipality.¹⁰²⁸ The current mayor is Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge. He came to office in June 2021.¹⁰²⁹ Hargeisa comprises eight districts, each with its own set of sub-villages. These districts are Mohamoud Haybe, Mohamed Moge, Ibrahim Kodbur, 31 May, Ahmed Dhagah, 26 June, Ga'an Libah, and Mo'alim Harun.¹⁰³⁰

(a) Demographics and clan composition/distribution

The population number of Hargeisa is somewhat unclear. Some sources mention that ca. 1.2 million people reside there.¹⁰³¹ Others estimate the population at around 1.5 million.¹⁰³² Members of the Isaaq clan-family currently make up most of the city's population.¹⁰³³ Besides Isaaq, Somalis from other clans of the region including Gadabursi and Ise (or Issa) and, due to recent conflict in the east of Somaliland, only very few Dhulbahante and Warsangeli reside there.¹⁰³⁴ Hargeisa also has an old population of various minority groups, especially Gabooye living there.¹⁰³⁵ There are also immigrants and displaced individuals from Ethiopia, especially the Oromo region, and from Yemen.¹⁰³⁶

While people belonging to different clans or ethnic origins can generally reside across the city, certain districts are dominated by certain groups. The Isaaq/Arab and Isaaq/Ayub clans populate Ahmed Dhagah, while the Isaaq/Garhajis (Eidagale and Habar Yonis) clans populate Mahamuud Haybe and parts of Gacan Libaah district, such as the New Hargeisa sub-district. The Isaaq/Habar Awal clans (Sa'ad Muse and Isse Muse) predominantly populate Ibraahim Koodbuur, as well as the 26th June district and parts of Gacan Libaah, such as the sub-district

¹⁰²⁵ Cities Alliance, East Africa City Corridor, 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰²⁶ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 16

¹⁰²⁷ Adam, S. M., et al., Household food insecurity and its association with academic performance among primary school adolescents in Hargeisa City, Somaliland, 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰²⁸ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰²⁹ [url](#)

¹⁰³⁰ Jama Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and factors associated with ever had road traffic accidents among drivers in Hargeisa city, Somaliland - 2022, 2023, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁰³¹ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 1; Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 16

¹⁰³² Adam, S. M., et al., Household food insecurity and its association with academic performance among primary school adolescents in Hargeisa City, Somaliland, 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰³³ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰³⁴ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025.

¹⁰³⁵ Vitturini, E., 2023: The Gaboye of Somaliland: The Historical Process of Emancipation and Marginalisation, Ledizioni

¹⁰³⁶ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 1

Sheikh Madar. Members of the Gabooye group are mainly found in the Daami sub-district of Gacan Libaah.¹⁰³⁷

(b) Humanitarian situation overview

Poverty is widespread in Hargeisa. Many people live of meagre salaries that must suffice for larger families with often 7-9 persons living in a household.¹⁰³⁸ The most vulnerable are IDPs. There are 16 IDP settlements in Hargeisa, comprising 11 549 households with a total population of 71 606 individuals. Among these, 46 544 (65%) are women, and 17 902 (24%) are children under the age of five.¹⁰³⁹ Many of those living in IDP camps in Hargeisa struggle with meeting basic needs, especially regarding food access and access to healthcare services. Access to water and education was mostly not a problem.¹⁰⁴⁰

2.2.2. Mobility and accessibility

(a) Hargeisa airport and flight connections

Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal International Airport is the main entry and exit point for flights to/from Somaliland. It is located in the south of the city. It was initially constructed as a military base in the 1950s. After the civil war in northern Somalia and the unilateral declaration of independence of Somaliland, the airport primarily served humanitarian purposes. From the mid-2000s, the number passenger and cargo flights increased markedly. It was rehabilitated in 2012, including the expansion of the runway and the implementation of enhanced security measures and technologies. As of June 2024, Hargeisa International Airport facilitated international flights to Addis Ababa (operated by Ethiopian Airlines), Dubai (served by Daallo Airlines and Flydubai), Nairobi (operated by Daallo Airlines, and Jubba Airways) and Djibouti (Djibouti Air). Domestically, it was connected to Mogadishu (operated by African Express, Daallo Airlines, and Jubba Airways), Galkayo (operated by Jubba Airways), Garowe (operated by Jubba Airways), and Bosasso (operated by Jubba Airways).¹⁰⁴¹

(b) Internal mobility, including checkpoints

Roads in Hargeisa are of very varied quality. Despite ongoing rehabilitation efforts, road conditions are still often poor, and there are insufficient road signs and traffic lights. This in combination with insufficient vehicle maintenance, the younger age and aggressive behaviour of some drivers, and the lack of education contributes to the frequency of traffic accidents in

¹⁰³⁷ Abdifatah Ismael Tahir, The production of clan segregation in urban Somalia: Historical Geographies of Hargeisa, 2021, [url](#), p. 54

¹⁰³⁸ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025. Bootaan works as an accountant in a company in Hargeysa, where he grew up and lives. He graduated from Hargeysa University in 2016

¹⁰³⁹ Ahmed Ismail Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and associated factors of acute diarrhoea among under-five children living in Hargeisa Internally Displaced Persons, 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰⁴⁰ REACH, Durable Solutions Readiness Assessment (DSRA) Hargeisa - Somaliland, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-3

¹⁰⁴¹ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 38

the city.¹⁰⁴² Additionally, water trucks that are frequently used in Hargeisa and vehicles transporting khat (coming from Ethiopia) are causing traffic problems including accidents.¹⁰⁴³

There are many *bajaj*s (motor rickshaws) operating in Hargeisa, but also still mini-buses. Despite the poor infrastructure in Hargeisa, public transport is the most common form within the city. IOM found in 2022: 'Big public buses charge around 2,000 Sh. SL (\$0.20) to 3,000 Sh. SL (\$0.40). Hargeisa also has an uber-like taxi system known as Dhaweeye. Residents request the services of Dhaweeye using an app or a short code (*3000#) with a minimum charge of \$1 with increments of \$0.5 per KM.'¹⁰⁴⁴ In the city there are no checkpoints (except ad hoc ones). Around the presidential palace, the road is blocked (since the Al-Shabaab attacks in Hargeisa in fall 2008). At the main entrances to the city, coming from the west (Gabiley) and the northeast (Berbera), there are checkpoints mainly for custom checks.¹⁰⁴⁵

(c) Accessing and settling in the city

There are no formal requirements and restrictions with accessing and settling down in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁴⁶ However, citizenship of Somaliland is regulated by a specific citizenship law, which, according to article 2(1) awards citizenship by birth only to those "whose father is a descendent of persons who resided in the territory of Somaliland on 26 June 1960 and before."¹⁰⁴⁷ Other Somalis can settle in Hargeisa and also some refugees from Ethiopia, Yemen and other places reside there.¹⁰⁴⁸

(d) Documents and procedures for accessing and settling in the city

No publicly available information could be found on this topic during the time limits of the research.

2.2.3. Socioeconomic indicators

(a) Economic overview and food security

Hargeisa is the central economic hub of Somaliland, in combination with the port of Berbera and the 'Berbera Corridor' running through Hargeisa into Ethiopia (and vice versa).¹⁰⁴⁹ The economy of Hargeisa is mainly based on small to medium scale enterprises which cover 77% of the total employment in the city.¹⁰⁵⁰ Trade and commerce are important aspects of the city's

¹⁰⁴² Jama Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and factors associated with ever had road traffic accidents among drivers in Hargeisa city, Somaliland - 2022, 2023, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁴³ Jama Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and factors associated with ever had road traffic accidents among drivers in Hargeisa city, Somaliland - 2022, 2023, [url](#), p. 15

¹⁰⁴⁴ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁴⁵ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁴⁶ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁴⁷ Somaliland, Citizenship Law, August 2014 [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁸ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁴⁹ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁵⁰ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.



economy. Informal trade in the region and across borders plays an important role.¹⁰⁵¹ Most of these businesses have been noticeably established within the last five to ten years, indicating a relatively recent surge in entrepreneurial activity.¹⁰⁵² Also specialised construction skills, livestock rearing and remittances provide income for families in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁵³ Central for the local economy are various markets, such as the livestock market, the bustling central market (Waheen Markat), the agriculture market, the electronics market and some others.¹⁰⁵⁴ DRC (2024) reported that balance between formal salaries (36%) and SMEs (49%) points to a mixed economy with contributions from both structured employment and entrepreneurial endeavours. 'Agriculture and livestock products contribute minimally (2%) to the district's economy, and 7% of the income is generated through diverse activities beyond the primary ones.'¹⁰⁵⁵

On the one hand, the economy in Hargeisa is booming. In the region, the city has 'the highest average income of \$806, followed by Wajaale at \$766 [...], and Berbera at \$737.'¹⁰⁵⁶ Notably, IDPs and refugees (e.g. from Ethiopia or Yemen) have a much lower average income. The pattern is only around 150-200 USD, which shows the level of vulnerability of these groups in the city.¹⁰⁵⁷ On the other hand, even though there are no recent reliable data, the unemployment rate in Hargeisa is high. Especially young people suffer from unemployment.¹⁰⁵⁸ The factors causing that include nepotism, clannism, poor educational system, and high youth population.¹⁰⁵⁹

The purchasing power of the local population in Hargeisa is primarily focused on basic commodities.¹⁰⁶⁰ Electronics and hygiene items are mainly imported via Berbera. Food and perishable commodities come predominantly from Ethiopia.¹⁰⁶¹ A recent (2024) study on food insecurity of primary school children found: 'The overall prevalence of household food

¹⁰⁵¹ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁵² DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰⁵³ Jama Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and factors associated with ever had road traffic accidents among drivers in Hargeisa city, Somaliland - 2022, 2023, [url](#), p. 3; Danish Refugee Council (DRC) January 2024: DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰⁵⁴ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁵⁵ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 27

¹⁰⁵⁶ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰⁵⁷ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰⁵⁸ Muse Abdilahi Muhumed 2018: Youth Unemployment and Security in Hargeisa. Somaliland Peace and Development Journal Volume 2, October 2018: 72-78, p. 72; Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁵⁹ Muse Abdilahi Muhumed 2018: Youth Unemployment and Security in Hargeisa. Somaliland Peace and Development Journal Volume 2, October 2018: 72-78, p. 72

¹⁰⁶⁰ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 27

¹⁰⁶¹ DRC, Labour Market Analysis Somaliland: Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for migrants, January 2024, [url](#), p. 26



insecurity among school adolescents in Hargeisa City was 59.21%. This finding is much higher than the national prevalence of household food insecurity, which is 53%.¹⁰⁶²

The economy is challenged by the generally poor public infrastructure including roads and garbage collection. Electricity is mainly privately-owned. The government-owned Hargeisa Water Agency is providing water in public taps, still, water is scarce in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁶³

(b) Housing and shelter

Most people in Hargeisa live in stone houses. Poor people live in shacks. The rent prices for houses vary depending on the size of the house and if it entails a courtyard and if it is connected to the water pipe-network. The cheapest houses can be found in Ahmed Dhagah district, sub-district Sinai. There a four-bedroom house without courtyard and tap-water would cost around 200 USD/month. The most expensive houses are typically found in Ibrahim Koodbuur district (e.g. in sub-district Jigjiga Yar), where a four-bedroom house with courtyard and tap water could cost up to 500 USD/month.¹⁰⁶⁴ A shag with two rooms, in which a poor family can take shelter, can be rented for 80-100 USD/month.¹⁰⁶⁵

(c) Hygiene, water and sanitation

Water is generally scarce in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁶⁶ The government-owned Hargeisa Water Agency provides public taps.¹⁰⁶⁷ Most houses do not have water delivered in pipes. In 2023 it was found that 'less than 25% have access to tap water. [... The] distribution system does not allow an equitable distribution of water. The distribution system works with gravity.'¹⁰⁶⁸ Most people in the city must fetch water from public taps or wells, or receive water by trucks.¹⁰⁶⁹ In poorer neighbourhoods like Daami, Digaale, Malawle, and the State House, where many minorities and also IDPs reside, water provision is especially limited. Throughout the city, the main sources of water in Hargeisa are public taps, donkey carts, and water tanker trucks, with public taps accounting for 18 %, water trucks for 48 %, donkey carts for 19 %, and other sources for 15 % of the water provision.¹⁰⁷⁰ The water infrastructure in Hargeisa is not in line with the growth of the city's size and population.¹⁰⁷¹ Water for a family of 8-9 people (which is normal in Hargeisa) living in one household costs around 25-30 USD/month. The water delivered to households, e.g. by trucks, is fit for human consumption.¹⁰⁷² The affordability of water is a concern for many

¹⁰⁶² Adam, S. M., et al., Household food insecurity and its association with academic performance among primary school adolescents in Hargeisa City, Somaliland, 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰⁶³ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁶⁶ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶⁷ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁷⁰ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, pp. 10-12

¹⁰⁷¹ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 12

¹⁰⁷² Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025



residents in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁷³ Waste collection, transport and disposal are the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Hargeisa. Waste is dumped in specific dumping sites.¹⁰⁷⁴ Garbage collection is not always functioning well.¹⁰⁷⁵

(d) Health care

A specialised source reported that Hargeisa features one referral public hospital, eight private hospitals, twenty-five private clinics, and ten public Maternal and Child Health centres (MCHs).¹⁰⁷⁶ Another source mentioned twenty-four hospitals, 97 health centres and 162 health posts serving the entirety of the population.¹⁰⁷⁷ The main public hospital is Hargeisa Group Hospital (HGH). It has six main departments, 30 service sections/units, and approximately 700 employees. Every day, 'HGH receives and serves around 260 patient visitors, including approximately 20 women in labour and delivery.'¹⁰⁷⁸ There is no admission fee for the public hospitals. Only some medication and some dressing materials need to be paid. If someone needs to stay in the hospital, overnight is free but food has to be provided by relatives or friends.¹⁰⁷⁹ The IOM found in 2022: 'There are also free and state-run Mother and Child Care centres designed to provide essential services such as nutrition and free delivery to many of the neighbourhood communities in Hargeisa.'¹⁰⁸⁰ Those who can afford it, however, prefer private hospitals. Well-known private hospitals in Hargeisa are Gaargaar, Manhal, Haldoor, Hussein Deeqle and Edna Aaden Hospital. The admission and treatment fees in those private hospitals are considerable. In some, admission and treatment for some smaller issues cost 50-100 USD, depending on the issues. Operations and stationary treatment are more expensive.¹⁰⁸¹

(e) Education for children

Sources vary on the number of schools in Hargeisa. One source mentions that Hargeisa 'has twenty-one governmental primary schools, fourteen private primary schools, eighteen kindergarten schools, and six boarding schools.'¹⁰⁸² Another source speaks of 'nearly 350 schools (32% of the total schools in Somaliland) in Hargeisa.'¹⁰⁸³ Schooling for children costs in Hargeisa. Public schools are officially free of charge, but practically the teachers actually

¹⁰⁷³ Nasir, M. Ali, Ayan Yusuf Ali, Building water infrastructures for sustainable social development: An analysis from Somaliland, October 2023, p. 11

¹⁰⁷⁴ The Ministry of Health Development October 2023: Improving Healthcare Services in Somaliland, Environmental and Social Management Framework, [url](#), p. 25.

¹⁰⁷⁵ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ahmed Ismail Mohamed, et al., Prevalence and associated factors of acute diarrhoea among under-five children living in Hargeisa Internally Displaced Persons, 2024, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Abdulrahman H, Bousleiman S, Mumin M, et al. A retrospective data analysis of psychiatric cases in Hargeisa, Somaliland between 2019 and 2020. S Afr J Psychiat. 2023;29, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷⁸ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁸⁰ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.

¹⁰⁸¹ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁸² Adam, S. M., et al., Household food insecurity and its association with academic performance among primary school adolescents in Hargeisa City, Somaliland, 2024, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁰⁸³ IOM, Areas with High Incidence of Return Migration in Somaliland: Community Profiling and Mapping of Support Providers, 2022, [url](#), p. 2.





collect monthly fees to upgrade their meagre salaries. Public schools cost around 10 USD/child/month. Private schools cost between 20 USD (elementary level) and 50 USD (secondary level) per child per month. Koranic school (*malcaamad*) costs around 10 USD/month/child.¹⁰⁸⁴

(f) Means of basic subsistence and employment

The salary level in Hargeisa is generally rather low. A watchman earns 100 USD/month. A cleaner earns 50-80 USD/month. A soldier or policeman without rank earns 150-200 USD/month plus food allowances. A middle-ranking officer earns up to 500 USD/month. A teacher at a public school has a basic salary of around 120 USD. He/she collects additional fees from the children. Depending on the size of the class a public school teacher earns between 250 and 300 USD a month. A teacher at a private school earns around 400 USD.¹⁰⁸⁵

2.2.4. Social support networks, including for specific groups

(a) Clan based protection

Clan protection plays a role in Hargeisa in everyday life. Dominant groups can protect their members and sometimes, elders or government officials try to interfere with the course of justice by releasing their relatives from police custody. Yet, generally, this happens less frequently than it did some years ago.¹⁰⁸⁶

(b) Returnees and vulnerable groups

Minority group members, especially Gabooye, are discriminated against in Hargeisa. They live in the most impoverished neighbourhood of the city. Often their children have limited access to secondary or tertiary education. Inter-marriage between Gabooye and locally dominant groups is stigmatised. Members of the Gabooye group are frequently insulted and harassed in everyday life. Hargeisa also has a considerable influx of IDPs and refugees, who seek jobs and contribute to economic growth.¹⁰⁸⁷ While most IDPs can move freely in Hargeisa, they face challenges. '74% of HHs [households] living in IDP sites reported being unable to meet their basic needs independently'; some 55% of IDPs in Hargeysa had difficulties with accessing food and 77% had difficulties with accessing healthcare services.¹⁰⁸⁸ Most IDPs in Hargeysa had access to education. But housing and land tenure security were problematic. In 2024 it was reported that '41% of HHs living in IDP sites relied on oral land agreements, leaving them vulnerable to disputes and eviction risks.' Moreover, '45% of HHs living in IDP sites relied on casual labor, while only 28% had access to salaried jobs.'¹⁰⁸⁹ In January 2024, 20 households (some 120 individuals) were evicted from three IDP sites in Hargeisa.¹⁰⁹⁰ Besides, some Somali

¹⁰⁸⁴ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁸⁵ Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025

¹⁰⁸⁶ Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

¹⁰⁸⁷ Cities Alliance, East Africa City Corridor, 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁸⁸ REACH, Durable Solutions Readiness Assessment (DSRA) Hargeisa - Somaliland, July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁸⁹ REACH, Durable Solutions Readiness Assessment (DSRA) Hargeisa - Somaliland, July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁹⁰ UNHCR, Somalia Operational Update, January 2024, [url](#), p. 4



returnees from Sudan, Egypt, and Libya were received in Hargeisa in January 2024 via the UNHCR-IOM's voluntary repatriation program.¹⁰⁹¹

2.3. Garowe

2.3.1. Overview

Garowe is the capital city of Puntland State of Somalia. It is also the capital of Nugaal Region. The current mayor (since 2022) is Abdulkadir Geedi.¹⁰⁹² Garowe consists of eight inner-city districts: Wadajir, Waberi, Hantiwadag, Hodon, Kowda August (1st August), Halgan, Mubarak/Horseed and Israc. Additionally, there are four IDP camps nearby, named Camp Jawle, Camp Shabelle, Hodaale and Boorweyn, which come under the administration of Garowe city.¹⁰⁹³ Many IDPs also reside in the city.¹⁰⁹⁴ The main markets of Garowe are the Inji Market (Hodan area), the Fadhiwanag market in the downtown area and the Maja Gorayo Market (Hantiwadaag area).¹⁰⁹⁵

The most expensive districts in Garowe are Mubarak/Horseed, Hantiwadag, Kowda August and Hantiwadag.¹⁰⁹⁶ Garowe, the capital of Puntland, Somalia, is a growing urban centre. Families residing in the city face varying expenses depending on their income level and lifestyle choices.¹⁰⁹⁷ Increasing rent prices are a challenge, particularly for low-income households. There is some industry in and around Garowe, including a water and a brick factory. But most incomes come from businesses, government jobs, and the informal sector.¹⁰⁹⁸

(a) Demographics and clan composition/distribution

Garowe has some 290 000 inhabitants¹⁰⁹⁹, of whom almost 56 000 are IDPs.¹¹⁰⁰ Garowe is the clan-homeland (*degan* in Somali) of Darood/Harti/Majeerteen/Ise Mahamoud. Most buildings and land are owned by Majeerteen/Ise Mahamoud. However, the population of Garowe is mixed. Many members of other Darood/Harti clans reside there, including Majeerteen from other sub-clans (e.g., Osman Mahamoud, Omar Mahamoud, Ali Salebaan), Dhulbahante, Warsangeli, Deshishe and others.¹¹⁰¹ Most inhabitants are, however, from the large Darood clan-family, whose members reside across Puntland and also in the Somali Region of Ethiopia,

¹⁰⁹¹ UNHCR, Somalia Operational Update, January 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁰⁹² Garowe city, Office of the mayor, n.a., [url](#)

¹⁰⁹³ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025. Mahad is an international humanitarian worker based in Garowe with long-standing experience in public health; Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025. Hassan has worked extensively with local government and university institutions to then establish himself as an independent businessman. He is a native and life resident of Garowe.

¹⁰⁹⁴ UNHCR, Somalia: Verified IDP Sites in Garoowe as of April 2024, 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁵ Garowe city, Urban profile, n.a., [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁶ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹⁰⁹⁷ Dalmar, Telephone interview, 7 March 2025. Dalmar is a businessman engaged in frankincense trade. He grew up in Puntland and resides mostly in Garowe and Bosaso

¹⁰⁹⁸ Dalmar, Telephone interview, 7 March 2025; Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹⁰⁹⁹ [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁰ UNHCR, Somalia: Verified IDP Sites in Garoowe as of April 2024, 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁰¹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

in parts of southern Somalia and in parts of northeast Kenya.¹¹⁰² Additionally, some Hawiye business people and also former IDPs from southern Somalia, who over the years settled into Garowe, reside in the city. Many former IDPs belong to the Rahanweyn clan-family or the Somali Bantu/Jareer minority group. Some members of other minority groups including Gabooye reside in Garowe.¹¹⁰³

(b) Humanitarian situation overview

In Garowe's hinterland, droughts lead to a steady growth of IDPs in the urban areas. In the city or the camps nearby, they meet other groups of IDPs from the southern Somalia that escaped from conflict. Most IDPs in Garowe settle in Waberi District or in one of the above-mentioned camp sites.¹¹⁰⁴ Currently these camps are transformed into permanent villages with the help of international organisations.¹¹⁰⁵ Some 77 percent of IDPs live in extreme poverty conditions. Some 67 percent of the non-displaced population also struggles with poverty.¹¹⁰⁶ The circa 56 000 IDPs in Garowe city hail from different ethnic and tribal backgrounds that shape not only their decisions about where to settle (e.g., which IDP camp) and the extent of local integration, but also have significant implications for their access to basic social services and interactions with the local residents. IDPs can benefit from and contribute to the social, political, and economic lives of urban centres and host communities, but the majority of them are unemployed and, when they are, perform informal casual work, particularly in construction and domestic services.¹¹⁰⁷

2.3.2. Mobility and accessibility

(a) Garowe airport and flight connections

Garowe International Airport (also called General Abshir International Airport) is the third largest airport in Somalia. It located some 12 kilometres outside of the city.¹¹⁰⁸ It was established in its current location around 2007. Over the years it was enlarged and developed. There are around ten flights daily. Domestic flights connect Garowe to Mogadishu, Hargeisa and Bosaso. International flights connect Garowe and Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Dubai and Jeddah.¹¹⁰⁹ The international flights are mostly operated by Ethiopian Airlines, Djibouti Air, Freedom Airline Express, Said Airlines and Daallo Airlines (the latter three being Somali-owned).¹¹¹⁰ Domestic flights are offered to Mogadishu through Freedom Airline Express, Jubba Airways, and Daalo Airline; to Galkacyo via Jubba Airways; to Hargeisa through Jubba

¹¹⁰² Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

¹¹⁰³ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁰⁴ IOM, Component 4 of the Nagaad Project (SURP-II): Updated Environmental and Social Management Plan, 4 April 2024, [url](#), p. 5; Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁰⁵ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁰⁶ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁰⁷ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 1 and 3

¹¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 38

¹¹⁰⁹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹¹⁰ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 38



Airways; and to Bosasso via Ethiopian Airlines and Jubba Airways.¹¹¹¹ In 2023, 14 999 arrivals and 18 957 departures were counted at Garowe airport.¹¹¹²

(b) Internal mobility, including checkpoints

Three large roads lead into Garowe: one coming from the east, from Lasanod; one coming from the north-east, from Bosaso; and one coming from the south, from Galkayo. Checkpoints are located at these three city entrances. They are manned by Puntland police. Cars entering the city are loosely controlled. Only if there is a suspicion or an alert, measures to monitor entries/exits more carefully are taken.¹¹¹³ Inside Garowe, there are no permanent checkpoints. Only *ad hoc*, the police sometimes sets up controls.¹¹¹⁴

(c) Accessing and settling in the city

Newcomers who are ethnic Somalis can settle in the city and also rent a place and register a business. Usually, an ID or passport is required for renting and/or registering a business. Yet, regarding renting a place, there are also cases where people know each other or someone vouches for the tenant. Then formalities, including an ID, are not required.¹¹¹⁵ Indeed, people from all over Somalia can settle in Garowe and start a business. In recent years even IDPs and refugees coming from Ethiopia (e.g. Oromo) get to some degree integrated in Garowe. In the wake of the recent war of Puntland forces against ISIS¹¹¹⁶ some foreigners were deported from Garowe (and other places in Puntland), including Oromo, Yemenis and Syrians.¹¹¹⁷

Non-Somali foreigners can get work permits according to Article 33 of Law No. 65 (Labour Law). The law mandates that the Ministry of Labour must clarify if there is a Somali national with an equivalent qualification and experience who could take the job before a foreign worker can be employed. Moreover, background checks must be conducted by the relevant authorities and it must be clear that the candidate has no criminal history. Once all is cleared, a work permit and a corresponding visa can be issued to a foreigner.¹¹¹⁸

(d) Documents and procedures for accessing and settling in the city

A Somali national settling into Garowe has to, at least in theory, provide an ID and register with the local government. In practice, however, people can also settle through personal connections.¹¹¹⁹

¹¹¹¹ Ahmed Nur Ali, A Qualitative Study on Security Challenges of Somali Civil Aviation Industry in the Post-conflict Era, June 2024, [url](#), p. 38

¹¹¹² Somalia, National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract, November 2024, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹¹³ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹¹⁴ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹¹⁵ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹¹⁶ Pieter Van Ostaeyen and Paweł Wójcik 21 February 2025: The Islamic State in Puntland, Somalia, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁷ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹¹⁸ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), p. 16

¹¹¹⁹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025



2.3.3. Socioeconomic indicators

(a) Economic overview and food security

Unemployment is a big problem in Garowe. Many young people are struggling to find a job. Many international organisations that used to run offices in Garowe moved to Mogadishu in recent years.¹¹²⁰

(b) Housing and shelter

In Garowe, most people live in houses. The rent of a four-five bedroom house in one of the more expensive neighbourhoods of Garowe (e.g. Mubarak), sufficient for a family of six persons, including toilet, shower, kitchen and, sometimes, a small courtyard, could cost around 400-450 USD/month. The average price for a house sufficient for Somali family would be 250 to 350 USD/month rent. There are also cheaper options for between 150 and 200 USD/month.¹¹²¹ One room in a house can be rented for around 50 USD/month.¹¹²² Water and electricity are extra, plus food. See section below for further details.

(c) Hygiene, water and sanitation

There are three main types of water used by households/people in Garowe: bottled water, purified water delivered by water trucks, and tap water. Bottled water is clean and for human consumption. A carton of 42 bottles costs 4 USD. It is consumed by those who are better off. Purified water is delivered by water trucks and stored in specific tanks in the house. It costs 3 to 3.5 USD per 'foosto' (which is 200 litres). It is typically used for cooking; it is also for human consumption. Tap water comes in pipes. Most houses in Garowe are connected to the pipe system. It is typically used for washing.¹¹²³ Some houses also, as a fourth type, capture rain water in so called 'berkedo' (singular *berket*). These are water catchments usually next to a house. In the dry season, they can be filled by trucks bringing rainwater from elsewhere. The latter is expensive. An average household using purified water and tap water consumes around 30-40 USD/months in water, all together, for human consumption, cooking and washing plus toilet.¹¹²⁴ Throughout the city of Garowe, the monopoly with water delivery lies with Nugal Water Company (Nuwaco). Recently, numerous complaints about the poor water quality and high water bills have been reported.¹¹²⁵

(d) Healthcare

There are two large public and some seven larger private hospitals in Garowe. The two public ones are Garowe General Hospital and Gol Nugaal Maternity Hospital. The General Hospital has around 200 beds. Gol Nugaal Maternity Hospital has ca. 15 beds.¹¹²⁶ Among the private

¹¹²⁰ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025; Abdirisaq, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025. Abdirisaq is a scholar based in Garowe with long standing experience in the education sector

¹¹²¹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹²² Dalmar, Telephone interview, 7 March 2025

¹¹²³ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹²⁴ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹²⁵ Puntland Post 28 May 2024: Political Power Becomes a Barrier to Entry in the Puntland Water Supply Market, [url](#)

¹¹²⁶ Jaalle, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025. Jaalle is a medical doctor based in Garowe; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025



hospitals, Qaran Hospital has around 30 beds, Sixa (Siha) Hospital has around 45 beds and Arafat Hospital has around 60 beds.¹¹²⁷ Besides, there are a number of smaller mother and child healthcare centres (MCHs) which are also public. The admission fee in the two public hospitals is 10 USD/per admission. In the private hospitals the admission fees are ca. 15 USD.¹¹²⁸ Treatment for smaller issues including medication (like stomach pain) can cost around 20 USD in a public hospital; the price in a private hospital could be the double or up to 60 USD. A caesarean section in a public hospital in Garowe costs 100-150 USD; in a private hospital it is around 300 USD. Operation and treatment for a more complex leg fracture is 300-400 USD in a public hospital, and up to 1 000 USD in a private hospital.¹¹²⁹ Those who can afford it prefer private hospitals. Some private clinics are run by medical doctors who returned from the diaspora. The quality of services is good. But their capacity is low.¹¹³⁰ There is no specialised treatment for mental health issues available in any of the public or private hospitals in Garowe.¹¹³¹ There are private 'rehabilitation' centres for mentally ill or deviant people sometimes also called '*dhaqan celis*' (return to culture). These centres are run by sheikhs. Treatment entails mainly reading the Koran to the patients, who are more held like inmates. They are guarded and inhabitants cannot leave. Sometimes physical or psychological abuse happens in those privately run places.¹¹³²

(e) Education for children

Numerous public and private schools exist in Garowe. Additionally, children typically attend Koranic school (*dugsi*) before or at the same time of going to elementary school. Koranic school starts early morning and goes for some two hours (e.g. between 5:45 and 7:30 am). It costs between 10 and 15 USD/month. Elementary and middle school starts around 8 am. Public elementary and middle school costs around 13-15 USD/month, a private school costs ca. 15-20 USD/month. Public secondary school costs around 20 USD/month, a private one up to 40 USD/month.¹¹³³ There is no free schooling in Garowe (or elsewhere in Puntland).¹¹³⁴

(f) Means of basic subsistence and employment

On the one hand, there is a shortage of some specific labour force to meet demands;¹¹³⁵ on the other hand, unemployment, especially youth unemployment is an issue. In Garowe, youth unemployment stands at 39 %.¹¹³⁶ The problem is a skill gap in the Garowe job market. There is a construction boom going on, but many Somalis do not have the required skills related to technical trades such as plastering, plumbing, and electrical work. Many companies recruit skilled foreign nationals for positions in the construction and hospitality sectors from

¹¹²⁷ Jaalle, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹²⁸ Jaalle, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹²⁹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹³⁰ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹³¹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

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¹¹³³ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹³⁴ Abdirisag, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹³⁵ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹³⁶ Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict Analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), p. 8



Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Yemen, and Kenya.¹¹³⁷ Some IDPs can profit as day labourers from the construction boom. But they face also competition from skilled foreign workers who can operate modern construction equipment and technology.¹¹³⁸ Additionally, some (including Oromo from Ethiopia) engage in farming, growing vegetables nearby Garowe city.¹¹³⁹

Basic costs for living vary along 'class-lines'. Those better off and earning more spend more on housing and food. Others have to restrain themselves. The income differences in Garowe are stark, yet not as large as in Mogadishu, where very many international organisations have their offices and pay partly very high salaries. In Garowe, a watchman would earn some 200-300 USD/month. A cleaner in an office or a shop/company would earn 200-300 USD/month. A maid who lives in a household and has overnight and food included gets some 100 USD/month. A construction worker earns between 10 and 15 USD/day. If he would find work 20 days a month, he can earn 200-300 USD/month. A soldier or police man earns 200-250 USD/month plus food allowances (rice, flour, oil) worth 30-50 USD/month. A nurse earns between 300 and 400 USD/month and a medical doctor in a public hospital around 1 000 USD/month. In a private clinic, salaries of doctors are higher, up to 1 500 USD/month plus extras (e.g., in case of operations). A school teacher earns between 400 and 500 USD/month. A university lecturer gets 200 USD per course, and he/she could teach up to four courses a month, meaning the salary is around 800 USD/month; during semester breaks it is less. Government officials earn between 100 USD/month for a low-level clerk in an office to around 1 000 USD/month for a director general; in some ministries salaries can be higher.¹¹⁴⁰

Housing for a poor family of six people costs at least 150 USD/rent per month, for a better off family between 300 and 500 USD/month. Water costs between 25 and 40 USD and electricity for a family, 20-40 USD/month, depending on consumption and equipment. Food would cost between 150 USD/month for a poor family and 350 USD/month for a well-off family. In total, a poor family of six persons would need per month, if a house has to be rented, around 350 USD. Adding to this, there would be the costs for schooling of around 10-20 USD/child, and medical care. A better off family with a substantial 'middle class' income would need 700-800 USD/month, plus schooling for children (15-25 USD/child) and medical care. If a house is owned, the monthly costs decrease.¹¹⁴¹ Another source confirmed: a medium-sized family, typically consisting of two parents and five children, requires an estimated 600 USD per month to cover basic necessities.¹¹⁴²

¹¹³⁷ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹³⁸ Mohamed B. Said, Transforming Lives: Empowering IDPs in Puntland with Technical Skills for Employment, September 2024, [url](#), p. 9

¹¹³⁹ Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁴⁰ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025; Jaalle, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁴¹ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025; Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025

¹¹⁴² Dalmar, Telephone interview, 7 March 2025



2.3.4. Social support networks and availability of support to specific groups

(a) Clan-based protection

Society in Puntland, and therefore also in Garowe, is clan-based.¹¹⁴³ Clan elders are an important institution for effective conflict resolution in Garowe.¹¹⁴⁴ Generally, there are various clans groups residing in Garowe. The locally dominant group is Darood/Harti/Majeerteen/Ise Mahamoud. Besides, various other Darood groups reside there, including many Harti (like: other Majeerteen, Dhulbahante, Warsangeli and others), but also Darood/Leylkase or Darood/Awrtable. Refugees from southern Somalia and minority groups also have a significant presence in Garowe. On the one hand, clan protection works according to group strength. But on the other, and possibly predominantly, the formal justice system (based on a trained judiciary) works and is, in principle, open to every resident of Garowe regardless of clan (size and power). If there is a conflict between individuals, the matter can be adjudicated quite effectively before local courts.¹¹⁴⁵

(b) Returnees and vulnerable groups

A considerable number of IDPs reside in three camps near Garowe. These are Camp Jawle, Camp Shabelle, Hodaale and Boorweyn. Many of these IDPs are from southern Somalia (mainly Rahanweyn and Bantu/Jareer). Others are people from Puntland (north-eastern Somalia) who lost their animals during recurrent droughts in the region over the past years.¹¹⁴⁶ The CCCM Cluster for Somalia reported in May 2022 that there were 26 IDP sites in and around the city 'hosting 8,541 households or 53,541 individuals.' Only very few (1,4 %) had difficulties with accessing health services. But 36 % of IDP sites had severe risks of eviction.¹¹⁴⁷ One source added that 'While IDPs in Garowe still face barriers to care, there is also access to health clinics and human rights defenders.'¹¹⁴⁸

¹¹⁴³ Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict Analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁴⁴ Agency for Peacebuilding, Conflict Analysis, Garowe and Galkayo, September 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹⁴⁵ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹⁴⁶ Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025

¹¹⁴⁷ CCCM Cluster Somalia, Verified IDP sites in Garowe as of May 2022, 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁸ Boeyink, C., et al., Pathways to care: IDPs seeking health support and justice for sexual and gender-based violence through social connections in Garowe and Kismayo, Somalia and South Kivu, DRC, 2022, [url](#), p. 8



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Ibrahim Issaq, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7, 10, 16 March 2025. Ibrahim Issaq is a Somali development practitioner and Chair of Poverty Concern, a Somali NGO based in UK with field expertise in South-West State of Somalia.

Mohamed Abdullahi, Telephone interview and email exchange, 26 February, 3 March, 18 March 2025. Mohamed Abdullahi is the Director of programmes at Horncenter Dialogue for Peace, Governance, and Development (The Horncenter), an independent, not-for-profit organisation based in Dushamared, Galmudug State of Somalia. He is an expert in reconciliation, peace-building, and governance.

Salim Said Salim, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7 April 2025. Salim Said Salim is a Somali legal expert and the executive director of SIDRA (Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis). Salim is based in Garowe, Puntland.

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Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025. Roland Marchal is a Senior Fellow at the Centre de Recherches Internationales at Sciences Po, in Paris, since 1997, with a specialisation in Somali politics and conflict dynamics. He is also the co-founder of the research programme, the East Africa Observatory.

Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025. Shamso Sheegow is a Somali writer based in Sweden with extended contacts in Barawa. She runs an NGO supporting environmental projects in and around Barawa.

Sheekhnor Kaassim, Telephone interview, 2 April 2025. Sheekhnor Kaassim is a Benadiri elder based in the USA.

Said Haji Nuur, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. Said Haji Nuur is a humanitarian and development official based in Garowe.



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Amina, Telephone interview, 24 June 2024. Amina is a Somali scholar with focus on social science research based in Mogadishu.

Bootaan, Telephone interview, 7 April 2025. Bootaan works as an accountant in a company in Hargeysa, where he grew up and lives. He graduated from Hargeysa University in 2016.

Conflict and peacebuilding researcher based in Somaliland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 7-8 April 2025. The Conflict and peacebuilding researcher has long-standing experience with conflict analysis and resolution.

Dalmar, Telephone interview, 7 March 2025. Dalmar is a businessman engaged in frankincense trade. He grew up in Puntland and resides mostly in Garowe and Bosaso.

Fadumo, Telephone interview, 28 March 2025. Fadumo works as medical doctor in Mogadishu where she has been based for more than a decade.

Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025. Fayza is a Somali civil society practitioner partly based in Somalia and partly abroad. She runs an NGO addressing societal issues across Somalia.

Hassan, Telephone interview, 5 April 2025. Hassan has worked extensively with local government and university institutions to then establish himself as an independent businessman. He is a native and life resident of Garowe.

Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview and email exchange, 15, 18 March 2025. The independent political and security analyst based in Jubbaland works as a consultant and has long-standing experience with conflict analysis.

International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview, 31 March, 3 April 2025. The international humanitarian expert based in Somaliland has decades-long experience in Somalia and in the humanitarian sector in general.

Jaalle, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025. Jaalle is a medical doctor based in Garowe.

Mahad, Telephone interview, 6 April 2025. Mahad is an international humanitarian worker based in Garowe with long-standing experience in public health.

Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024 and 28 March 2025. Siyaad is a medical laboratory supervisor in Mogadishu. Originally from northern Somalia he relocated to Mogadishu in 2013.



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Somali development scholar based in Puntland, Telephone interview, 3 April 2025. The Somali development scholar based in Puntland is a seasoned researcher, university professor, and observer of Somali issues.

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Country Focus: Profiles and KSEI

Reference period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2025

PART I: PROFILES

Profiles will be addressed building upon, expanding or updating the 2023 EUAA Report on Defection, Desertion and Disengagement from Al-Shabaab, the 2023 EUAA Query on Repeated FGM, and the 2021 EUAA Report on Targeted Profiles.

1. Recruitment and desertion/defection
 - 1.1. Men, women, and child recruitment by Al-Shabaab
 - 1.1.1. Repercussions for refusing to be recruited
 - 1.1.2. Repercussions for deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab
 - 1.2. Men, (women), and child recruitment by other actors
 - 1.2.1. Repercussions for refusing to be recruited
 - 1.2.2. Repercussions for desertion
2. Women and girls
 - 2.1. GBV, types, including domestic violence, prevalence and situation of women in the Somali society, including forced and child marriage
 - 2.1.1. GBV and situation of women under Al-Shabaab, including forced and child marriage
 - 2.1.1.1. Situation of women who left Al-Shabaab and repercussions for leaving Al-Shabaab
 - 2.2. FGM and repeated FGM
 - 2.2.1. FGM, forms, practices, performers and (extended) family's role
 - 2.2.2. Repeated FGM, forms and practices
 - 2.2.3. Repercussions for refusing to undergo the practice
 - 2.3. The situation of single and minority women, notably in IDP camps, or women and girls with lack of network support
3. Individuals contravening religious (and customary) laws/tenets
 - 3.1. Individuals contravening religious laws in Al-Shabaab controlled areas (e.g. the issues of blasphemy and apostasy, including converts, extramarital relationships, individuals perceived as to have been influenced by foreign cultures etc.)
 - 3.2. Individuals contravening religious (and customary) tenets elsewhere in Somalia (e.g., the issues of blasphemy and apostasy, religious minorities, etc.)
4. Minorities
 - 4.1. Low Status Occupational Minorities
 - 4.2. Minority clans
 - 4.2.1. Minority clans/group in the local context
 - 4.3. Clans specialised in religious services
 - 4.4. Ethnic Minorities
 - 4.5. Mixed-marriages, implications and sanctioning



5. Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues
 - 5.1. Mapping of major clan conflicts
 - 5.2. Clan revenge and vulnerability in clan conflicts
 - 5.2.1. For men
 - 5.2.2. For women and girls
6. Individual supporting or perceived as supporting the FGS/the International Community, and/or as opposing Al-Shabaab
 - 6.1. Civilian government and governance officials, district commissioners (2 pp)
 - 6.2. Members of parliaments, clan and people representatives, clan elders, electoral delegates
 - 6.3. Military personnel, including army officials, ATMIS/AUSSOM, FMS forces, clan militias, Macawisley and others
 - 6.4. Other individuals opposing or perceived as opposing Al-Shabaab, including human rights defenders, humanitarian/NGO personnel, etc.
7. Journalists
 - 7.1. Media freedom and general situation
 - 7.2. Journalists' main syndicates, protection and remedies
 - 7.3. Treatment and targeting
 - 7.4. Situation in Al-Shabaab controlled areas
8. LGBTIQ+
 - 8.1. Legal framework
 - 8.2. Societal attitude and treatment by the state
 - 8.3. Treatment in Al-Shabaab controlled areas
9. Somalis who have resided long in neighbouring countries or other countries in the region (namely in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, UAE)
 - 9.1. Background and distinctions (elite, lower status, long-term and short-term)
 - 9.2. Situation and treatment upon return
10. Individuals who have to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab or militias
 - 10.1. Repercussions for refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab or for paying taxes to others
 - 10.2. Repercussions for refusing to pay 'taxes' to others

PART II: SOCIO-ECONOMIC KEY INDICATORS – SOMALIA

The socio-economic key indicators in three locations – Mogadishu, Garowe, and Hargeisa - will be addressed building upon and updating the 2021 EUAA Report on Key socio-economic indicators.

Mogadishu

1. Mogadishu's overview
 - 1.1. Demographics and clan composition/distribution
 - 1.2. Humanitarian situation overview





2. Mobility and accessibility
 - 2.1. Mogadishu airport and flight connections
 - 2.2. Internal mobility, including checkpoints
 - 2.3. Accessing and settling in the city
 - 2.4. Documents and procedures for accessing and settling in the city
(including security aspects, screening of returnees, control procedures, ID requirements)
3. Socio-economic indicators
 - 3.1. Economic overview and food security
 - 3.2. Housing and shelter
 - 3.3. Hygiene, water and sanitation
 - 3.4. Health care
 - 3.5. Education for children
 - 3.6. Means of basic subsistence and employment
4. Social protection networks and (lack of) support to specific groups
 - 4.1. Clan based protection
 - 4.2. Returnees and vulnerable groups

The same structure applies to **Hargeisa** and **Garowe**





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