

## 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. Many Somali-Bantu still speak their original (Bantu-)languages or a version of them.<sup>[431](#)</sup> 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.<sup>[432](#)</sup> 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.<sup>[433](#)</sup> Jareer residing in Bay region also speak Af-Maay.<sup>[434](#)</sup> They are also known for specific cultural practices like music, dance, and agriculture festivals.<sup>[435](#)</sup>

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.<sup>[436](#)</sup> They suffered greatly from massive (racialised) discrimination and exclusion throughout the 20th and early 21st century.<sup>[437](#)</sup> 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.<sup>[438](#)</sup> Bantu/Jareer suffered from dis-appropriation of their farms during the land-reforms in Somalia in the 1970s.<sup>[439](#)</sup> In the 1990s their land and storages were looted by clan militias.<sup>[440](#)</sup> 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.<sup>[441](#)</sup>

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.'<sup>[442](#)</sup>

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.'<sup>[443](#)</sup> They are treated as second-class citizens.<sup>[444](#)</sup> Their population size is likely much larger 'than that reflected by their representation in government under the 4.5 formula', which favours the majority clans.<sup>[445](#)</sup> They still face land grabs and forced displacement due to lack of political influence.<sup>[446](#)</sup> Discrimination also continues in IDP camps, where Bantu are discriminated and their women lack (clan) protection.<sup>[447](#)</sup> Lack of societal and political participation and protracted discrimination 'pushed some Bantu youth into joining al-Shabaab.'<sup>[448](#)</sup> For further details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.<sup>[449](#)</sup>

### ☐ (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.<sup>450</sup> They speak their own language, Ki-Bajuni, which is a Bantu language close to Ki-Swahili.<sup>451</sup> Bajuni also reside across the border at the coast of northern Kenya.<sup>452</sup> Their culture is influenced by the Swahili and Arab traders.<sup>453</sup> Bajuni residing along the coast or on the Bajuni islands engage in fishery. Some also engage in trade and agriculture.<sup>454</sup> Bajuni, like other coastal communities practicing fishery, ‘suffer from reduced fish stocks due to environmental degradation.’<sup>455</sup>

Bajuni have long been marginalised by the dominant Somali clans in the region.<sup>456</sup> Today, some Bajuni reside also in Mogadishu. In urban settings, they enjoy higher levels of healthcare access.<sup>457</sup> In general, the Bajuni are a very small ethnic group of around 10 000 to 15 000 people.<sup>458</sup> The Somali government recently estimated that Bajuni constitute 0.2% of Somali population.<sup>459</sup> 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.<sup>460</sup> For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.

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