

Press Release

PR 14/2014
3 October 2014

Somalia in Focus

EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information (COI) report on Somalia

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled 'South and Central Somalia: Country Overview'. The report provides a comprehensive overview of facts relevant for the asylum application process of Somali nationals in several EU+ countries.¹

In 2013, Somalia ranked 7th in the top countries of origin in the EU+ countries, with a total number of 20,810 applicants. The Somali caseload affected 22 out of 30 EU+ countries. Topics covered in the report include: general country information; the clan system and ethnic groups; the security situation; Al Shabaab; Human Rights; migration; mobility; and displacement. The Somalia report aims to provide information to support: COI researchers; first and second instance decision makers; and policymakers active in the national procedures for the assessment of asylum applications from Somali nationals.

Regarding the security situation, attention is given to the Al-Shabaab insurgent group. The Human Rights situation is described for areas under the control of respectively Al-Shabaab on the one hand and the Government with the African Union military mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces on the other hand. In this regard, one finding of the report is, for example, the practice of abducting young girls for forced marriages with Al-Shabaab fighters. The report highlights how in 2013, thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Mogadishu were evicted by force out of their settlements. This was done not only by private landowners or gatekeepers, but also by the Mogadishu administration, in attempts to clean up the capital, without finding any safe alternative for the IDPs. Furthermore, the report also stresses the importance of clan protection against violence by aggressors from outside the clan. On the other hand, it also nuances the role of the clan in the current situation in South and Central Somalia. Special attention is also given to the position of different minority groups and their safety.

By providing this report, EASO aims at ensuring a common comprehensive information package on countries of origin of importance at EU level. To this end, in 2013, EASO adopted a *Network Approach* for COI in order to make use of the existing national COI capacity in the EU, avoid duplication and fill in gaps including via the joint production of common EU COI products. This involved the setting up of COI *Specialist Networks* on key countries of origin at European level, including Somalia.

¹ EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland

Researchers from Austria, Slovakia, Switzerland, The Netherlands and EASO participated in the joint drafting process of this country overview report within the context of the EASO COI *Specialist Network* on Somalia. The report was written in accordance with common COI quality standards as described in the EASO [COI Report Methodology](#). It was reviewed and commented upon by other experts (from Finland, Sweden and the UK) in order to check and ensure quality.

It is EASO's intention to continue to produce such reports on important countries of origin and to update them on a regular basis in order to raise and harmonise COI standards in the EU and to further support the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

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